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TORIAL

A CALL TO DEBATE

Of all the issues not being discussed by Presidential hopefuls of both parties, there is none more neglected than the present plans to revive the peacetime draft.

The candidates' silence is reinforced by a hardening, tacit bipartisan consensus that if SALT II (supposedly an arms-control agreement) passes, the U.S. investment in war forces ought to increase. Hand in hand with this military expansion goes the revival of conscription. The issues of a voluntary versus a conscript Army; how, when and whether to commence registering young people (assuming that "silent registration" by computer is not already under way); who should serve, who should be exempt; should only young men be drafted—all of these questions and more ought to be addressed by would-be Presidents. Thus far, however, only President Carter has been confronted with it, and he has opposed registration for now.

Any debate on the issue, if it is to have substance, must deal with the larger question of the growing militarization of our society and the dominance of our political culture by militaristic values. On the right-hand side of this page, Bertram M. Gross provides a detailed analysis of the issues. *The Nation* believes that "The Drive to Revive the Draft" raises critical questions. To assist in the search for answers we are co-sponsoring a series of discussions and debates in colleges, high schools and community groups throughout the country. The first, on the question "Should American Youth Be Registered for the Draft?" will be held in conjunction with the Yale Political Union in New Haven in November. If your school or organization is interested in co-sponsoring a similar meeting, call or write Karen Wilcox at our office, and she will help you in arranging for speakers, reprints of the Gross article, publicity and format.

DIALOGUE: BLACKS & JEWS
Alan Sagner
Aryeh Neier

U.S.-VIETNAM: MISSED CHANCE
Gareth Porter

DECONTROLLED GREED
Fred J. Cook

THE LIBERTARIANS
Carey McWilliams

THE BUREAU
Frank Donner

MAILER & GILMORE
Earl Rovit

SPECIAL REPORT

THE DRIVE TO REVIVE THE DRAFT

BERTRAM M. GROSS

A powerful drive is now under way in Washington to register young people for future military conscription. At least one of the plans—"passive" or "faceless" registration by means of a computerized central file—is shrouded in bureaucratic secrecy and media indifference. Another, "national youth service" or "universal service," has received some strained praise but little recognition of what it really is—a militarist project decked out in pseudo-liberal finery. But in whatever guise, the drive to resurrect conscription of the young represents a new and dangerous threat both to constitutional democracy and to the safety and security of the American people.

In the Congress, politicians have been maneuvering frantically to avoid taking a stand on the issue before the 1980 elections. In the Senate, Sam Nunn, Democrat from Georgia, and some others on the Senate Armed Services Committee have abandoned for now plans to bring back the draft and have, instead, proposed registration alone. Under Senator Nunn's bill (S.109), all males between 18 and 26 would be required to appear before their local draft boards by January 2, 1980, and register. The House moved more cautiously. Its bill (H.R. 4040) would have affected only 18-year-old men and would have taken effect after the 1980 elections. There were plans afoot to challenge the men-only aspect constitutionally, but then, in an adroit parliamentary maneuver, House liberals—allied with an odd lot of hawks, conservatives and libertarians—united behind a motion introduced by Representative Patricia Schroeder, Democrat

(Continued on Page 360)

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DIALOGUE.

IMPRECISE ANALOGY

New York City

Aryeh Neier's recent editorial, "Blacks and Jews" [*The Nation*, Sept. 15], begins with these lines: "The main grievance of Jews against blacks is that some black leaders have made common cause with the enemies of Israel. The main grievance of blacks against Jews is that some Jewish leaders have made common cause with the enemies of affirmative action." The analogy is altogether wrong, because the parts within the equation are wrong. In the first instance, it is wrong to equate opposition to Israel with opposition to affirmative action. The enemies of Israel have vowed to destroy it as a nation and have murdered scores of Israeli men, women and children in pursuit of their goal. The "enemies of affirmative action" have fought only in the courts; they do not seek the death of black people. Those who believe that racial preferences are unconstitutional cannot reasonably be put on the same footing as those who kill defenseless civilians.

Second, Mr. Neier's statement is wrong because Jewish organizations (as distinguished from individuals) have opposed *quotas*, not affirmative action. Jewish organizations have consistently supported affirmative steps to help blacks enter the mainstream and to succeed in college and in employment. But every Jewish organization opposes quotas based on race, religion or national origin because they violate the historic principles of the civil rights movement. When the Federal Government or universities or employers seek to impose quotas, but choose to call them "affirmative action," no one is fooled by the use of a euphemism.

Despite the imprecision of his analogy, one senses that Mr. Neier is absolutely right in his implicit suggestion that some black leaders have made common cause with the P.L.O. as a way of getting back at Jews for arguing against quotas in the courts. But the question remains: Why have Jews been singled out for retribution, when the overwhelming majority of anti-quota briefs were filed by non-Jews? The Gallup Poll has demonstrated that very few Americans support quotas, yet only Jews are singled out for retribution. Similarly, why have the Rev. Joseph Lowery and the Rev. Jesse Jackson allied themselves with the enemies of Israel, when far more grievous threats to life and peace with which they should identify can be found elsewhere in the world, such as in Cambodia, where one million or more people face starvation this winter, in the totalitarian governments in Africa or most logically (if not most newsworthy) here at home in the ghettos of our cities?

The civil rights movement has had moral force and political potency with Jews and blacks working closely together because its cause was founded on just and universal principles, especially the principle that the state must not discriminate among its citizens on the basis of race, creed or national origin. In the *Brown* case against school segregation, the N.A.A.C.P. insisted: "The Fourteenth Amendment precludes a state from imposing distinctions or classifications based upon race and color alone." Blacks and Jews fought side by side to vindicate Justice John Marshall Harlan's dissent from the *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* decision: "Our Constitution is colorblind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. . . . The law regards man as man, and takes no account of his surrounding or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved." The civil rights movement, it should be added, was devoted to nonviolence *on principle*, a principle which those who now court the P.L.O. seem to have forgotten.

So long as the civil rights movement adheres to the principle that distinctions based on race and creed are irrational and unconstitutional, Jews and blacks can be allies. Jews have not abandoned the alliance nor given up the belief that an individual should be judged by his own worth and not by who his parents were. *Alan Sagner*

NEIER REPLIES

New York City

Is it "irrational" for Israel to give preference to Jews, determined by their parentage, in migrating to Israel and becoming its citizens? I don't think so. Israel's existence, as I wrote in my brief editorial, is justified morally by the need to provide Jews who have been persecuted as Jews and who remain vulnerable a land of their own where they can aid one another and resist their oppressors. If Mr. Sagner shares this view, why is it so difficult for him to see that blacks who have been persecuted as blacks and remain vulnerable might also be morally justified in obtaining preferential consideration for positions in which they can aid one another and resist their oppressors? Justice Harlan wrote in his dissent in *Plessy* (this passage is less well known than the one Mr. Sagner quotes) that, "The white race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so it is, in prestige, in achievement, in education, in wealth, and in power. So, I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time." Perhaps the inadequacy of Harlan's "colorblind" formula has something to do with discontent with Harlan's vision of perpetual white dominance.

Mr. Sagner objects to the alliances some black leaders are forging with the enemies of Israel. So do I. Just as I criticized those Jewish leaders who do not see that the same moral principle supports both the establishment of Israel and affirmative action, I criticized comparably myopic black leaders. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference visit to Lebanon had not taken place when I wrote my editorial. If it had, I would have labeled the chorus of "We Shall Overcome" its officers sang with a gun-toting Yasir Arafat as I do now: obscene.

Mr. Sagner's criticism of my use of the term "affirmative action" would be well taken if I had not explained what I meant by it. In my editorial, however, I wrote that, "It is not sufficient now to provide [blacks] with the opportunity to compete equally." To my regret, many leaders of Jewish organizations have been in the forefront of those making common cause with the enemies of affirmative action—so defined. No, the enemies of affirmative action have done nothing analogous to terrorist murder, an analogy I did not suggest. On the other hand, what they have done isn't limited to quarreling in court. They have perpetuated societal arrangements that keep blacks out of jobs and schools. They are not murderers but they are responsible for much misery. *Aryeh Neier*

In future issues we will be printing other letters we have received concerning the relations between blacks and Jews.

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EDITORIALS.

Papal Pilgrim

Much was written, spoken and televised on the impact of the Pope upon America—most of it superficial; but less has been said about the impact of America upon the Pope. Certainly the genuineness, good humor, kindliness and hardiness of the man, speaking English in his richly accented basso profundo, charmed the ecumenical millions who witnessed his progress through the country. But unfolding before him, along streets and highways, in cities and great halls and open country, was a blurred diorama of America—and specifically of Catholic America. What, we wonder, did the pilgrim find and see, beyond that blur of faces and places?

He has been here before, of course; he has seen the polls showing a majority of American Catholics opposed to the church's teachings on birth control and divorce, and sizable numbers unsympathetic to the conservative views on ordination of women, married priests, homosexuality, abortion and other ecclesiastical and "social issues" that he enunciated in his homilies. But to these questioners and critics, and to the 20 percent of the church who are lapsed, he had little to say. Had he listened, he might have heard the uniquely American idiom of some of them—the nun who was disappointed that the Pope did not "dialogue with us" on women priests, the radical priest criticizing the Pope for being trapped in his "job description" (i.e., remote), the ex-priest in Chicago speaking of the "middle-management" revolt there against John Cardinal Cody's stern rule.

To these voices of ferment within the church John Paul II offered little sympathy. When a nun in Washington spoke of the concern felt by many of her sisters over the church's opposition to the ordination of women, the Pope winced visibly and his hands made an involuntary shooing motion. To be sure, no one expected him to speak any differently on birth control and all the rest, but his failure to offer a little of the grace of surprise only underscores the difficulties

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this humanistic man has in breaking institutional molds.

In his novel *Pierre*, Herman Melville wrote, "God's truth is one thing, and man's truth another." Melville, the old sailor, compared divine truth to a kind of heavenly Greenwich mean time—an absolute "chronometrical time"—which differed from relative worldly time—the "horological time" of the variegated time zones on earth. To many Catholics these days, the church's strictures on the "social issues" seem impossible absolutes, as fixed and remote as Melville's chronometrical time; and so they practice the "virtuous expediency" Melville called for.

In his speech before the United Nations General Assembly, however, John Paul II welded the church spiritual and the church temporal into a powerful moral force. He located the roots of war "where the inalienable rights of men are violated," and said, "Injustice first attacks human rights and thereby destroys the organic unity of the social order. And it then affects the whole system of international relations." He spoke of the link between material and spiritual rights, the former abrogated by the "frightful disparities" between rich and poor within and among nations and the latter by suppression of freedom of speech, thought and religion. He spoke more vaguely to the Palestinian question, but his words on those who foster arms races were sharp: "In alleging this threat of a potential enemy, is it really not rather the intention to keep for oneself a means of threat in order to get the upper hand with the aid of one's own arsenal of destruction?" These wise words express this Pope's abiding belief that human beings are, as he said several times, "subjects," not objects.

Teddy Speaks

Senator Edward Kennedy came to a dinner recently with the Investment Association of New York. Winning the confidence of the business community, as it is commonly known, is part of the drill for Presidential candidates, including unannounced ones. But in showing he had no horns, Kennedy made the liberals eyeing him as their 1980 Galahad wonder if he had any heart either.

Kennedy called for "a major new national commitment to the twin goals of productivity and innovation." His proposals for accomplishing this comprised a smorgasbord of inducements to businessmen through tax reduction, cartelization of research and a renewed partnership between business, academia and the government—only with businesses calling the tune. This smacks of Nixonomics: lavish "incentives" on business and hope prosperity results and trickles down to the poor. Saying that "we" are making a "clean break" with the New Deal, the policies of the 1960s and the idea that "public planning is inherently superior or more effective than private action," Kennedy invoked "a growing consensus, which I share, that government intervention into the economy should come only as a last resort, when market forces fail to meet important needs such as protection of public health and safety."

In other words, Kennedy seemd to deep-six the Federal regulatory process. Or, perhaps, he was saying nothing at all. Deregulating airlines to generate lower fares is one thing; and cutting away the strangulating trucking-industry regulations, which were tailored to protect vested interests, is another (both Kennedy programs). But the regulations under heaviest fire from business these days (see John Tirman, "Business Wars on the Regulators," *The Nation*, December 30, 1978) are mainly those dealing with "public health and safety"—pollution standards, workplace conditions and the like. They were imposed because the operation of "market forces" on their own rarely produces technological innovations such as smoke-scrubbers or lower levels of exposure to toxic materials. So we can only assume that the Senator was engaging in polite political noises. Or can we?

One Tyrant Less

Fawning courtiers were told to address him as "Savior of the Republic," "man of steel," "Central Africa's guide and creator," "steel-boned helmsman" and "Central Africa's St. Christopher." He was, of course, Emperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa, the bottomlessly corrupt, murderous ruler of the former Central African Empire, who was deposed by French soldiers on September 20.

During his thirteen-year reign of terror, foreign diplomats accorded him full punctilio; when he spent millions on a ridiculously pompous coronation while children starved, representatives of the nations of the world flocked to pay homage. In 1969, a few months after uranium was discovered in Central Africa, Gen. Charles de Gaulle, mindful of the future needs of his *force de frappe*, received Bokassa

HINDSIGHTS

Let's see now—do we have this straight? Brezhnev says he'll withdraw up to 20,000 Russian troops and 1,000 tanks from East Germany on the eve of disarmament talks between the NATO and Warsaw Pact nations. He also offers to reduce the number of medium-range missiles if no new Pershing and cruise missiles are installed in Britain, Italy, West Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. He also wants the United States to ratify SALT II so that SALT III talks on further disarmament can begin.

From the response in Washington, you'd have thought he announced he was sending a Soviet combat brigade to Idaho. President Carter: ". . . an effort designed to disarm the willingness and eagerness of our allies adequately to defend themselves." Zbigniew Brzezinski: It will lead to "intimidation at best and even war." Thus we bluster instead of talk, rearm in order to disarm.

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and called him "comrade." France had economic and geopolitical reasons to be comradely with Bokassa, and he gave diamonds to high-level French officials to enhance the economic returns. David Dacko, the man he overthrew in 1966 and who is also the man who replaced him, was then considered a "Maoist," and with Chinese and Soviet feelers shooting out in Central Africa, the French stuck with the tyrant they knew rather than risk change. Bokassa committed a steady stream of atrocities, all known to the French, all covered up. It was said that in his heyday Bokassa was stealing $90 million a year from the treasury. In 1974, he was treated to an official visit to Paris and laid a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. In 1977, newly elected President Giscard d'Estaing paid his first state visit to Central Africa and embraced Bokassa as a "cherished relative."

But the Emperor's subjects grew restive; students led demonstrations; the army had to be ordered to barracks because their loyalty was in doubt, and even the Quai d'Orsay realists could not wave away the murder of 200 schoolchildren—many by the Emperor personally, it was said. Under these conditions, such a tyrant must be removed, preferably by his people, but in Bokassa's case by the French who had legitimized him. In the wake of that welcome act, concern must now shift to the new President, David Dacko, whose utterances thus far betray either considerable obtuseness or the rapid gyrations of a puppet whose master has gotten the strings crossed. An interim period of French-enforced stability is probably in order—but only until new elections can be held, and the Central African people can choose their own President.

In the meantime, note that Bokassa is the third tyrant deposed in Africa this year (Idi Amin and Macías Nguema Biyogo of Equatorial Guinea being the others). They will not be missed—unlike the late Agostinho Neto of Angola, who in sharp contrast to them had the interests of his people at heart. There is gratification, too, in the installation of democratic leaders in Ghana and Nigeria—and hope that tyrants such as Bokassa are fading from the African scene.

HAD ENOUGH?

The Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition and the Progressive Alliance, which sponsored a "national day of protest" against high gas and oil prices on October 17, have drawn up a Citizen's Energy Program, which will be introduced as a legislative package in Congress. The Citizen's Energy Program calls for reimposing price controls on crude oil, heating oil and natural gas; laws to force oil companies to maintain production, and a taxpayer-owned energy corporation that would buy and distribute oil and gas and develop other forms of energy. The coalition's national headquarters is at 600 West Fullerton, Chicago, Illinois 60614 (phone 312-975-3680). There is a Washington office: Room 401, 1300 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20036 (phone 202-857-3680).

Radioactivism

Recently we dilated on the importance of citizen power in formulating nuclear policy. As it happens, an outstanding example of what concerned citizens can do, and the obstacles thrown up by governmental agencies and the nuclear industry to prevent them from doing it, has come our way. This is a report entitled "How Radioactive Is Our Milk?" It was researched with the financial support of the Another Mother Fund for Peace, an organization located in Beverly Hills, California.

Lest the study's provenance suggest an amateur production of limousine liberals, we should say at the outset that it is a voluminous document (it will be published as a book) packed with facts, figures, charts and graphs. It has involved considerable first-hand investigative reporting and, in one instance, a tugging and hauling session with a noncooperative state agency engaged in a cynical cover-up.

Briefly, the Another Mother Fund study concluded, on the basis of its investigation of radioactivity-monitoring procedures in Wisconsin and California (which produce 16 and 10 percent of our total milk supply, respectively), "State efforts for monitoring environmental radioactivity indicate unjustified complacency at best, corruption at worst. . . ." The milk-monitoring programs in the two states were shot through with faults in methodology and data collection; the milk samples for analysis are collected by nuclear-utility employees, for example, and state monitoring agencies are toothless watchdogs. Sampling is done quarterly—a poor way of monitoring releases of iodine-131, which has a half-life of eight days. Under lax N.R.C. regulations, data on radioactive emissions are compiled by the plants themselves and considered "proprietary information," not available to the general public. Public access to state data on milk contamination is also impeded; delays of up to a year occur between when samples are taken and release of the report to the public. Federal standards require reports on health effects of each utility's effluents, but these are seldom made. Some utilities have heightened emissions due to ruptures in the fuel-rod cladding which persist for years, but the N.R.C. response is to increase the release limits to accommodate the additional radiation.

We could go on—the Another Mother Fund report contains clear and solid recommendations for improving the situation, as well as a sharp indictment of suppression by the Government and the industry of data on harmful radiation in the past—but we will simply underline the fund's conclusion: "On the basis of plausible assumptions suggested by recent research, the cancer incidence in [California and Wisconsin] due to ingested radioactive substances (mainly strontium-90) could be 400 to 2,500 a year." Amid the controversy over the safety of nuclear reactors, sparked by the accident at Three Mile Island, we can't afford to lose sight of the silent, long-run effects of "routine" nuclear-power generation.

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SECOND THOUGHTS

CAREY McWILLIAMS

The first official 1980 Presidential nominee was chosen recently by 600 delegates to the Libertarian Party convention in Los Angeles. The Libertarians' standard bearer is Ed Clark, a soft-spoken 49-year-old lawyer from the prosperous suburb of San Marino, California. His running mate is David Koch, a New York City attorney. The Libertarians, "sick unto death" with taxes, as who isn't, are getting ready to stage "a very big Tea Party" in 1980; they hope in fact to poll several million votes next year, a goal they just might achieve. By starting a year in advance of the conventions of the two major parties, they expect to be able to get on the ballot in most states.

The Libertarian Party was born in June 1972, when fewer than a hundred rugged individualists assembled in Denver and nominated John Hospers, a professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California, for President. Hospers appeared on two state ballots and received a total of about 5,000 votes. In 1976, the party nominated Roger MacBride, who managed to get on the ballot in thirty-two states and polled around 175,000 votes. Then in 1978, the party polled 1.3 million votes in a variety of state and local contests, elected a member to the Alaska Legislature and rolled up nearly 400,000 votes for Ed Clark in the California gubernatorial election. The party has a 43-year-old multimillionaire sponsor, one Charles Koch (David's brother), who heads a large family-owned conglomerate with holdings—cattle ranches, oil pipelines, etc.—in Texas and Oklahoma, and is estimated by *Fortune* to be worth between $500 million and $700 million. The Cato Institute of San Francisco, directed by Edward H. Crane 3rd, a 34-year-old former investment manager, is a Koch-backed think tank that grinds out tracts, reports and position papers for the party and feeds material to *The Libertarian Review* and *Inquiry*. Since January 1977, the Cato Institute has spent about $1.25 million a year to establish itself as a public-policy research foundation of the tax-deductible variety.

At the recent convention at the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, the delegates, who came from all but three or four states, were described as generally youngish, mostly white, well educated and well dressed. The Libertarian "radicals" are against laws prohibiting gambling, drug use, prostitution and the right to commit suicide; they are also against gun control and U.S. intervention in the Middle East and South Africa; in general, they are nonhawkish. They also oppose government controls on wages, prices, rents, profits, production and interest rates. They favor U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations and abolition of the F.B.I., C.I.A., the existing Social Security system and the U.S. Postal Service; they seek a repeal of compulsory school attendance laws, a return to the gold standard and obliteration of personal and corporate income taxation.

The Libertarians were addressed by elder statesman Eugene McCarthy, who supports their third-party venture because he favors a multiplicity of parties; indeed, he is thinking about launching the McCarthy Party come 1980. Nothing if not ambitious, the Libertarians propose to change the course of history; they hope to fashion a society of unrestricted human freedom based on voluntary consent and a free market economy, without governmental sanctions or regulations. As one delegate put it: "I'm tired of being told what's good for me, and being forced to do it." Speakers described Gov. Jerry Brown as "a Hindu mystic version of Richard Nixon," laughed at President Carter as a man "attacked even by the rabbits," and denounced John Connally as "a rotten mackerel by moonlight—shining and stinking at once." The party's Presidential nominee is an attractive young man and a good campaigner.

That the Libertarians did quite well in the 1978 California gubernatorial election is explained by two considerations. Governor Brown had just switched courses on Proposition 13 and barely managed to outpoll Evelle Younger, the Republican nominee, in the primary; later he regained much of his personal popularity. The atmosphere in 1978 was ideal for the Libertarians. Many voters in both major parties were angry, disaffected and disgusted with "politics as usual." Also, the Libertarians were able—thanks to Charles Koch—to buy significant television time for their nominee.

But this does not mean that the Libertarians should be easily dismissed; they may well be able to tap a large national constituency made up of disaffected, frustrated, "none of the above" voters. Libertarian spokesmen are young, brash, intelligent, politically stylish and rhetorically resolute types. One gets the impression that they are ideological only in the sense that they emphatically reject consensus politics of the conservative-liberal-neoconservative variety. They are obviously not bigots or racists. They want to get government off their backs and ours; to them government is something separate from the people. They seem to be unaware of or indifferent to the years of patient effort that went into the development of a system of rural free delivery and other important government services now taken for granted. At times they sound like anarchists without the social conscience that animated the anarchist movement of former years. Their attitude toward the down-and-outers seems to be: get up and start cookin'.

That they have many potential allies and possible recruits is obvious. In Louisiana a candidate in the gubernatorial primary has legally changed his name to None of the Above, but a Federal judge held that his name-change came too late, and refused to allow him to be so listed on the October 27 primary ballot.

Laugh not at the Libertarians. If the present vacuum in national politics is not filled with some semblance of responsible party leadership, we may well be in for a period of new parties, adventuristic politics and a kind of pragmatic anarchism. In a word, the existing political vacuum could grow larger until, in default of responsible political leadership, it would be filled by an authoritarian negativism of the None of the Above variety. □

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VARIATIONS

CALVIN TRILLIN

Every American child—at least every male, white, Christian American child—is told that, this being the land of opportunity, he could grow up to be the President of the United States. What they don't tell him is that he doesn't have to be the President of the United States if he doesn't want to be. There are other respectable callings. It is obvious, in fact, that a young man who showed promise at being able to slice up an enzyme or put together an inspired clam chowder would be wasting his talents as President. The second-grade teacher never talks about that part of it, though, so every little white Christian boy in the class thinks he is the one who is supposed to be the President. That is why little white Christian boys often seem so much less interesting than little black or Jewish or Chicano or Chinese boys, or than any sort of little girls: little white Christian boys are under a lot of White House pressure. Almost none of them, of course, do grow up to be the President of the United States, and those who don't naturally feel disappointed. When a man who was led to believe that he might have "Hail to the Chief" played every time he entered a room realizes that he is going to spend his life in outer offices hoping to get a few minutes of the assistant buyer's time, there is bound to be a certain letdown.

It may be that the malaise discovered in our national soul by Patrick Caddell, the Melancholy Drone, is not what it appeared to be at the time—the malaise that might be found among the passengers of an ocean liner whose captain seems to be steering it in smaller and smaller circles—but simply the effect of there being so many white Christian males who are depressed by their belief that they ought to be President and aren't, compounded by their belief that Jimmy Carter oughtn't to be President and is.

The presence of Carter in the White House, of course, is based on the belief that the proprietor of any middle-sized agribusiness can rise to the Presidency if he simply works hard, studies at night with his wife to broaden their cultural horizons, and keeps a low profile during civil rights disputes. Carter was apparently given a sort of booster shot in this type of thinking while he was Governor of Georgia. According to the authorized version of how he happened to have the confidence to undertake what seemed like a hopeless race for the White House, Carter was visited by most of the national political figures who passed through Georgia during his governorship, and he decided, after observing them carefully, that if they could be national political figures he could be a national political figure too. Alas, he underestimated them. In taking the measure of his nationally known houseguests over dinner at the Governor's mansion, he failed to consider one factor: if a national political figure has spent the entire day with the Young Democrats of Georgia, and has then been denied a drink before dinner because the Devil's brew is not permitted within the mansion's walls, and has then been subjected to a two-hour dinner-table lecture on the beatific qualities of state government reorganization, that national political figure is not likely to be quite himself.

While reading all of this depressing talk of national depression—not to speak of a National Depression—it has occurred to me that one advantage of a monarchy is that a monarchy does not suffer the effects of having great clots of white Christians moping around simply because they aren't the king or the queen. (The other advantage of a monarchy is that the monarch never auctions off his memoirs, with an escalating clause on subsidiary rights.) In Britain, for instance, everyone knows that you can't grow up to be the King or the Queen unless you happen to grow up in Buckingham Palace. Nobody wants to grow up to be the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister doesn't even have a helicopter.

As a child growing up in Kansas City, I was subjected to an undiluted dose of the anyone-can-be-President tonic. For part of my childhood, after all, Harry Truman, someone everybody in town claimed to have known as a failed haberdasher on Thirty-First and Main, was, in fact, the President. Also, my father, who had been brought to Missouri from Eastern Europe as an infant, had the new American's confidence that absolutely anyone, regardless of race or creed or color, could grow up to be President—particularly me. I now realize why he was so casual about assuming that I should have Presidential expectations: Being ineligible because of his foreign birth, he didn't have to worry about becoming President himself.

When I was about 14, I decided against seeking the Presidency. Fourteen being an impressionable age, I was accustomed to making such major decisions on the basis of a picture in a magazine or a line in a film. Around the same time, I had decided against a career in the law when I saw someone in a movie—someone like Clark Gable—snap shut his briefcase, jam on his hat, and say, as he walked out of the room, "I'll have my lawyers draw up the papers." I had no intention of being the person who, instead of saying that, said, "Christ! Now I'll have to go back to the office and draw up the wretched papers."

My Presidential ambitions were ended by a phrase in the Kansas City *Star*: "The President is expected to submit his budget next week." Until then, I hadn't thought of the President doing anything like a budget. Waving to cheering crowds and shaking hands with the March of Dimes poster child were more the sort of things I had in mind. I hate budgets. I informed my father that I was no longer available. My father was, of course, disappointed, but, having observed me for a while with the same care Jimmy Carter later employed to observe visiting national political figures, he seemed to have adopted as a fall-back aspiration for me the hope that I would somehow escape becoming a ward of the county. I am still not certain how to avoid these problems with my own children. For the moment, I am telling them that in this country anyone can grow up to impeach the President.

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ARTICLES.

Draft

(Continued From Front Cover)

from Colorado, which placed the issue in the lap of President Carter. He was requested to submit by January 15 his recommendations on the desirability of resuming registration. Thus, for now, the battle has switched from the halls of Congress to the desk of Jimmy Carter.

So far, Carter has publicly stated he is opposed to the draft, but there is evidence indicating that the Administration has had under consideration for some time a plan to register young people through a central computerized list of names and addresses compiled by the Selective Service System from school records, drivers' licenses, income tax returns on file with the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security records. In Washingtonese, this is known as passive registration—young people are registered without their knowledge and without having to appear at a Selective Service office. David Landau of the American Civil Liberties Union calls it "*faceless* registration." Its proponents point out that with face-to-face registration we can expect some kind of rebellion from our nation's youth and that enforcement also raises the prospect of dragging tens of thousands of youths into courts. And a Defense Department study adds: "Should registration meet widespread resistance and strict enforcement be ordered, costs could be very high. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is not eager to enforce Selective Service registration." Defense Department statisticians figure that under active registration, 15 to 20 percent of all 18-year-olds would simply never show up—about the same number that would be missed by the computer. So the two systems would be equally effective—but with passive registration much cheaper in both money and political costs.

Backdoor Draft

Within the Administration, the Pentagon brass generally favor a draft "eventually" and registration right now. Clifford Alexander, Secretary of the Army, supports the pending legislation for active registration. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown wrote in a letter dated June 8, 1978, to Senator William S. Cohen, Republican of Maine, that instead of peacetime registration now, "the proper course of action is to enhance the standby ability of the Selective Service System, including its computer resources." This view was echoed on July 6 by James McIntyre, director of the Office of Management and Budget: "It is not necessary to impose this burden [i.e., active registration] on our nation and its youth when there are effective ways to improve the capability of the Selective Service System." Stuart Eizenstat, the President's domestic policy adviser, has said, "The Administration opposes new legislation to reimpose peacetime registration for the draft. The President already has adequate authority to require registration if circumstances warrant."

At a "town meeting" in Bardstown, Kentucky, on July 31, the President himself confused the situation by saying, "We are now reassessing the question of whether young people should be required to register at the age of 18. We might have to have registration for the draft as a precautionary measure." At a news briefing the next day, Press Secretary Jody Powell tried to clarify matters by stating that the President "remains opposed to proposals before the Congress that would mandate registration," and talking vaguely about correcting certain deficiencies in the Selective Service System. One of the realities being hidden by this executive fan dance may now be stated clearly: Passive registration is the back door through which a revived Selective Service could ultimately enter.

Computerized registration holds great attractions for the kind of people who favor central dossiers on all Americans and a waiver of most privacy laws governing access to school and government records. Moreover, once the first registration lists are run off, it will be pointed out that conscientious objectors and others are mixed in with the eligibles. This would produce both confusion and delay on "mobilization day," it will be argued. So, to avoid these delays and also to protect the conscientious objectors themselves, they will be given the privilege of coming to or writing the Selective Service in order to clarify their status. This would be a step toward the systematic classification—with physical and mental examinations, and all the rest—of all potential inductees on the list. Finally, the Big Brother approach has apparently diluted opposition to registration. Many of the most dedicated opponents of the draft have concentrated their fire on active registration without taking faceless registration seriously. Indeed, Representative Les Aspin, Democrat from Wisconsin—a stalwart liberal opponent of the Pentagon's elephantiasis—has become a leading advocate of doing the job with computers.

The Draft Drive's Dangerous Premises

Some advocates of registration for a draft insist that the volunteer Army, which replaced the draft in 1972, has been a failure. Others—mainly Army officers, proud of the volunteer Army—say that while it has worked well thus far, it must now be replaced or supplemented by a draft. Most agree, however, that voluntary enlistments cannot be relied upon to meet the need for soldiers during the 1980s. They offer a variety of reasons: (*1*) the military effectiveness of the present volunteer Army is not what it should be, (*2*) the armed forces, including the Reserves, are not large enough, and (*3*) more and better soldiers will be needed in the 1980s, and they cannot be obtained without a draft.

The contention that the present Army volunteers are not good enough is, in part, a dangerous exercise in thinly veiled racism. "The volunteer force is a disaster," proclaims Representative Robin Beard, Republican from Tennessee.

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Echoing the dismay of some Army brass over the fact that blacks are now 34 percent of all new recruits, Beard frankly spells out the kind of disaster he fears: "If current enlistment trends continue, 45 percent of the junior enlisted ranks in the Army by 1980 will be black and 65 percent of the noncommissioned officers." Another leader of the pro-draft forces, Senator Nunn, argues that the all-volunteer Army is "on the ragged edge of viability" and "will not work in the future." Sexism also rears its head. The number of female members of the armed forces rose from 1.9 percent in 1972 to 5.7 percent in 1977. The proposed registration program, it is thought, would help attain more "acceptable" percentages of white males. In this connection, it should be noted that the Senate and House bills and the proposed passive registration program are intended for males only.

More outspoken are the critics of the low educational level of the volunteer Army. Although this charge is true in a general sense, it is also applicable to the armed services as a whole: less than 2 percent of the total personnel have college degrees. As for the new volunteers, the proportion of high school graduates and the average I.Q. level are both higher than in the previous draft Army. True, there seems to be a shortage of doctors and skilled electronic experts. If so, this is hardly a problem to be handled by registering or drafting 18-year-olds.

The steadily rising rate of less-than-honorable discharges—15 percent of all discharges as of 1977—is also pointed to as a weakness in the present Army, and during the 1973-77 period more than 400,000 were discharged in this fashion, with serious effects on their opportunities for civilian employment. But a review of many of these cases by the A.C.L.U. suggests that the fault lies mainly with antediluvian and vindictive personnel policies. Most of the volunteers joined up to escape unemployment and to get some training not otherwise available. As the country's largest "equal opportunity" employer, the Army has helped young blacks and Hispanics to escape the agony of the devastating depression suffered in urban ghettos. Many of the new volunteers, it might be added, have found that the educational opportunities have been greatly exaggerated by recruitment officers, and their treatment in the armed forces has often been excessively rough.

Curiously, when the quality of the all-volunteer Army is discussed, no reference is made to the quality of military leadership. It is as though the auto workers, rather than the management, were to be blamed for the economic failures of the Chrysler Corporation. From the Joint Chiefs down, the aping of corporate management practice has developed the "officer as entrepreneur" and created a "personnel turbulence" in which 80 percent of the Army's people changed assignments in 1978. According to Richard Gabriel and Paul Savage (*Crisis in Command*), those command defects have been "the equivalent of a military disaster."

Pentagon Wish List

Turning to the question of quantity, we see at present a war force of more than five million people. Two million of these are in uniform (of whom almost a quarter are abroad), another two million or so are in the ready, standby and retired Reserves, and the remaining one million are Defense Department civilians. This does not include the much larger number in war industries, outer space exploration (which always has military implications), war research, war think tanks and veterans' assistance. In "The U.S. Military Posture for FY 1980," the Joint Chiefs of Staff ask for three additional U.S. divisions to reinforce the G.I.s in West Germany. In addition, the President subsequently asked the Pentagon to build a new Rapid Deployment Force capable of moving quickly into the Middle East, Africa or Latin America. In his January 1979 Congressional report supporting the President's request for war funds, Secretary of Defense Brown called for a substantial beefing up of the Reserves. If any of these requests had been based on Carter's so-called "zero-based budgeting," one could find

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some facts on how *present* personnel are being utilized and just why additions are needed. In the absence of such analysis, one must suspect that the so-called "military requirements" are little more than a wish list.

Even the conservative American Enterprise Institute has challenged this wish list. In his *Manpower for Military Mobilization*, Kenneth J. Coffee, a former Pentagon and Selective Service official, suggests that "the Pentagon planners have set manpower requirements without a careful in-depth evaluation of needs—a common practice during the manpower-rich draft years." In *The Price of Defense*, the Boston Study Group calls for a 50 percent reduction in the strength of the Army Reserve on the ground that their skills are associated with "light division adventurism" in Third World countries. Martin Binkin of the Brookings Institution suggests that demands for a large Reserve are more related to political influence than to genuine security. No one really knows, though, because the secrecy fog is so thick. Thomas Alder, publisher of the *Military Law Reporter*, has filed a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain the Pentagon's classified memorandum on which the current requests are based.

At a lower level of analysis, the registration-draft proponents complain that recruitment targets have been missed for the past three consecutive quarters. But this argument (echoed in a *New York Times* editorial of September 4) misses the major point—namely, that targets for total force strength (apart from the Reserves) are being substantially met by increased re-enlistments, possibly due to the bleak employment opportunities in the civilian job market.

What *The New York Times* seems to have ignored (but the officer corps understands full well) is that the larger the Army, the greater the opportunities for promotion. Under Selective Service, officers would be selectively better served—that is, according to rank—by more, better-trained and whiter liaison officers, media experts, systems analysts, masseurs, masseuses, file clerks, chauffeurs, waiters and bartenders. And with draftees paid lower wages than enlistees, more money might be available for equipment contracts and the *dolce vita* of swivel-chair generals, procurement colonels and their military-industrial complex buddies.

Needs of the 1980s

But what about the 1980s? Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff boast that "the United States remains as the premier world power," they warn against growing Soviet military capabilities. Leaving our shores to become NATO's Supreme Commander, Gen. Bernard Rogers warns that in the early 1980s "we should be prepared to be tested." If the tests he refers to involve new military intervention by U.S. forces—whether in the Persian Gulf oilfields, Latin America or Africa—he is fostering the old delusion, as manifested most recently by longtime U.S. support for the Shah of Iran and Somoza in Nicaragua, that military force can solve political, economic and moral problems.

But if more soldiers *were* really needed in the 1980s, could they be secured without a draft? Of course they could. Many more people could be recruited and retained by reducing the many racist and sexist barriers still existing in both the services and the Reserves. Much more could be done to curtail boot-camp barbarism. Many jobs in the military could be filled by civilians; far too much has been made of the time-worn idea that people performing support functions (the majority of the war force) should wear uniforms. More volunteers could be attracted by a sharp raise in the emoluments of reservists and the base pay of recruits—without raising a private's base pay above what state troopers, policemen or firemen receive. Large numbers of highly trained people could be obtained by upping the retirement age. Few people seem to know that "the typical new enlisted retiree is only 39 years old," as Martin Binkin points out in his authoritative *Youth or Experience? Manning the Military* (Brookings Institution, 1979). This "youth and vigor" mystique masks the fact that in almost all military work, as Binkin writes, "experience is worth more than physical prowess," and that in any case, only 16 percent of all armed forces personnel have combat jobs (30 percent in the Marines, 29 percent in the Army, 5 percent in the Navy and 2 percent in the Air Force). If the present twenty-year minimum length of service were raised to thirty, most of the present demand for specially skilled personnel could be met through retention.

Also, quite a few American G.I.s could be moved from where they are least needed to where they are most needed. To maintain more than 208,000 American troops in West Germany is a boondoggle. Assuming there is any reality to the military establishment's fears of a Russian invasion of Western Europe, there are certainly enough Western Europeans capable of handling their own self-defense. If Nixon's Vietnamization made sense, why not more Europeanization of NATO? At most, a "tripwire" force of 30,000, like that in South Korea, might be needed.

An Honest Draft: No Undergraduates Needed

Although I oppose a draft as unnecessary, I am not a 100-percent pacifist, and therefore believe it important to ask: If a draft were ever needed again, how should it be run? Since the present proposals are rooted in self-deception or dishonesty, I favor thinking about how a draft could be run honestly. An honest draft, as I see it, would apply to the Air Force, Navy and Marines as well as to the Army. This would end the myth that the former want only true volunteers (neglecting to mention that most of the "volunteers" are escaping the draft). Also, there should be none of the middle-class and upper-class deferments that became the general rule during the American intervention in Indochina. But above all, the age limitation on drafting young people should be abandoned.

In the Brookings Institution study already referred to, Binkin has marshaled compelling evidence to show that despite its need for more technicians and craftsmen than the civilian sector, the military still follows the old-fashioned and wasteful practice of recruiting young people who lack the needed skills. According to Binkin, a war force with a higher median age than the present one would be

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physically much more effective. "Maximal muscle strength," he reports, "is achieved between the ages of 25 and 30" and "severe age-deficits are not found until the sixth, seventh and eighth decades." In physically stressful civilian occupations such as policeman, fireman, teamster and stevedore, the median ages are 36, 38, 38.4 and 44.3 respectively.

But in any case, as already pointed out, most military jobs require technical and clerical white-collar workers and blue-collar craftsmen and service and supply workers. The proportion of such jobs has been steadily increasing. I submit that I and most of my male and female colleagues at City University and *The Nation* could do at least as well, and possibly much better, than people of college age in the great majority of military jobs. Business managers, bankers, lawyers, doctors, account and media people might also excel—for it is they who give themselves most devoutly to health clubs, jogging, tennis, discos and the martial arts. To exclude them from any new draft would be to deny the country the availability of their skills while also casting doubt on their patriotism. And along with Florida Representative Claude Pepper and the Gray Panthers, I would take personal offense if—without even the courtesy of appropriate physical and mental tests—an arbitrary age-ceiling were to be set at 65. With such an enormous pool of labor power to be drawn upon (presumably by lottery), it would then be possible to exempt all people below the age of 22 or 23. Instead of class-biased college deferments, no man or woman would be available for the honor before reaching the age of the average college graduate.

The National Youth Service Trap

The fixation on youth among older civilians is illustrated in *Youth and the Needs of the Nation* (Potomac Institute) recently issued by the Committee for the Study of National Service, co-chaired by Harris Wofford and Jacqueline Wexler, both former college presidents. This committee has tried to solve the problems of "what to do with people who object to military service on religious, moral or even political grounds." Their solution is to give them work at lower than prevailing wages in "schools, day-care centers, tutoring programs, programs for the elderly, hospitals, community health centers, institutions for the retarded and mentally ill, prisons and juvenile detention centers, neighborhood associations, city, county and national agencies for conservation, renovation and energy-saving, and efforts to deal with disasters of nature." The committee seems sublimely unaware that any such program would displace many thousands of people employed (or seeking employment) in these areas at better wages. Also, its middle-aged members seem to have no qualms about uttering these fatuous words: "All young people should be challenged to serve full time for one or more years in meeting the needs of the nation and the world community." This suggests that one can never trust anybody over 30 to serve the nation's needs. And if the test of such service is accepting very low wages, I should think that the challenge should be put mainly to older people who have already built up substantial equities.

In somewhat balder form, the youth-fixation idea was put forth a few years ago by Morris Janowitz, a University of Chicago sociologist. Under his plan, all young people would be registered at 18 and required to enter *either* military or nonmilitary service (at wages below the competitive wage in the civilian sector) before reaching 26. Representative Paul McCloskey, Republican from California and a former Marine active in the movement against the Vietnam War, has recently sponsored legislation along these lines. Janowitz now suggests that "we" shall have to use a mixture of strategies: voluntary Army in the short run, a series of pilot projects (presumably providing fat contracts to Pentagon-allied academics) on how to run national service projects, and then forward march into the full Janowitzed version of the report by the Committee for the Study of National Service. Wary at present of potential campus opposition to the return of the old-style draft, Janowitz seems to have convinced himself that "over the next decade the young people of the United States will be more and more inclined to accept national service." I would like to think that he, Representative McCloskey, Wexler and Wofford might see themselves as also being capable of national service.

Defending America's Vital Interests

The subversive nature of the peacetime draft has been described by the A.C.L.U.: "The most conspicuous and notorious character of any form of military conscription is its near-total subjugation of civil liberties. It is difficult to conceive of any activity of government which imposes more total—indeed totalitarian—controls on the citizens than a

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military draft. The right to reside where one wishes; to pursue an education; to select one's own employment, and to negotiate working conditions through collective bargaining; to travel or not as one desires and can afford; to marry and raise a family—all of these are destroyed by a draft." The A.C.L.U. goes still further by resolutely opposing both face-to-face and faceless registration during peacetime, as does the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, which emphasizes registration as a threat to constitutional democracy and true national security.

The threat, however, goes deeper than civil liberties. As the Congressional Black Caucus pointed out in June: "The draft facilitates involvement in foreign conflicts." With enhanced capabilities of intervention at his disposal, a President could once again—as one did during the Vietnam War—in effect take from the Congress the power to declare war by presenting it with a *fait accompli*. The expansion of the military always carries with it the very considerable danger of militarism—that is, the glorification of violence and the propensity to seek military solutions for moral, political and economic problems. This attitude spreads a subtle poison that permeates American life, fostering an ominous tendency to resort to police repression or private terrorism in areas of tension between ethnic groups. The acquiescence in militarism also makes a people more vulnerable to appeals from on high to chauvinism, enabling the establishment to deflect attention from social injustices at home by stirring up hostility toward imagined enemies abroad.

The most immediate requirement for defense against this assault is to recognize that the main battleground on draft registration has temporarily shifted from the Congress to the heart and mind of Jimmy Carter. By January 15, he must send to Congress his proposals not only on the central issues of face-to-face registration, faceless registration and a national youth service but also on whether women should be included, whether registration should be promptly followed by classification and examination and whether the President should be able to induct people directly into the Individual Ready Reserve. My guess, at this time, is that his message will be a bowl of mush on all major points, peppered with the kid-glove strategy of building up the computer capabilities of the Selective Service System and supporting national youth service to start on a volunteer basis. If enough is done by January 15 to bring the issue out from behind the fan dance, I believe that he—as well as Senator Edward Kennedy and Gov. Jerry Brown, who have not been notably forthcoming on the issue—might be compelled to say "no" to Big Brother's faceless registration. This could be another partial and temporary victory.

But promptly in 1981, according to Duane Shank of the Committee Against Registration and the Draft, and other Washington observers, the real drive for bringing back the draft will start rolling. To prepare for it, during 1980, one must remember the words of retired Marine Col. James Donovan: "The simplest, speediest and most readily understandable means of controlling militarism is to cut military manpower strengths and to reduce defense appropriations."

American-Made Tests

But any progress in this direction also requires basic changes in military leadership. The crisis in command runs deeper than the aping of corporate management methods. Commanders in Chief, generals and admirals have long been overly willing to adopt corporate goals of protecting investments in places like South Africa, Iran and Nicaragua and then present them with indefensible puffery as the vital interests of the American people as a whole. But this takes us to the dark heart of foreign policy, upon which I can only touch lightly in this article. In more strictly military matters, the higher officer corps still tends to see spit-and-polish, command and rigorous discipline (for subordinates) as the only path to the high motivation and morale on which military capability depends. (I exempt from this group the many courageous officers who support peace and internationalism.) Abroad, this leads them into abysmal ignorance concerning the roots of anti-American and anti-imperial movements in Third World countries. At home, it leads them into brutal destruction of the rights of enlisted men—and when the horrors of that brutality reach the public, the higher-ranking officers invariably refuse to take responsibility as they cowardly use lower-ranking personnel as fall guys. Indeed, I suspect that the higher levels of the war force are infiltrated by some influential officers who are conscientious objectors to civil liberties, human rights and any form of government other than authoritarian. This problem cannot be met by a simple oath to defend the Constitution. In many other fields officers can be promoted only by passing concrete tests. I believe we need American-made tests on such matters as the Bill of Rights, the Constitution as a whole and the principles of international law embodied in the Nuremberg decision and affirmed (with U.S. approval) by the U.N. General Assembly. It should be made perfectly clear that loyalty to the Constitution supersedes loyalty to any superior officer, including the Commander in Chief. Consideration should also be given to requiring that every full-time officer sign a sworn statement that he or she

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has never taken part, and is not now taking part, in any actions to (*1*) obtain subsequent employment with any company or institution doing business with the armed forces, (*2*) promote the subversion of any government anywhere in the world, or (*3*) deny constitutional freedoms to subordinates. Every full-time and Reserve officer should be obliged to swear that he or she is not engaged in any activity that violates the Constitution. Since the Constitution states that ". . . no person holding any Office under the United States, shall be a Member of either House during his Continuance in Office" (Article 1, Section 6), this should create some problems for the seventy Senators and Representatives now holding Reserve officer commissions and obtaining pay, pension privileges or dubious honor through this flagrant violation of the Constitution.

Thought might also be given to returning to one of the old—but now forgotten—traditions of a democratic military: the election of officers. This tradition, born in the American Revolution, lasted all the way up to World War I. I am informed by Benedict K. Zobrist, the director of the Harry S. Truman Library at Independence, Missouri, that on August 5, 1917, elections were held by the men of the 129th Field Artillery of the 35th Division. "Truman had hoped that he would become a section sergeant, but the men of Battery F did more than that for him. In those days the enlisted men elected officers, and when the tally was recorded, Harry S. Truman found himself a first lieutenant," Zobrist said. History does not suggest that this old American tradition (which the present strata of officer entrepreneurs either knows nothing about or would rather not be reminded of) interfered with the morale and dedication of the 129th Field Artillery or of the man who was later elected Commander in Chief.

The most immediate need is for a wide-open and widespread debate on the pending proposals for registration and draft, on the Administration's buildup of the Selective Service System's computers, and on the establishment's trial balloons concerning a "national youth service." I use the term "wide-open" to emphasize the citizen's right to know what the military, political and corporate overlords have in mind, including all the relevant information and misinformation now shrouded behind the many cloaks of executive, military and corporate secrecy. In saying "widespread" I am not referring to the media alone, whose capabilities for serious discussion do not fill me with enthusiasm. I would like to think that there may be better channels of communication among the people most directly affected by these proposals, as well as by the many alternatives to them. The most appropriate channels are in the educational system—not only the colleges and universities but also the high schools. I would like to think that these issues could be brought this fall and winter to high school assembly halls, college teach-ins and debating forums throughout America. The young people whose future is discussed in such detail by older people have a right to know what is being planned for them and what the full range of alternative views may be. Attention should be given to the slogan of the U.S. Students Association: "Register to Vote—Don't Vote to Register." Action along these lines could be a major forward step in resisting subversion by strengthening both constitutional democracy and true national security. □

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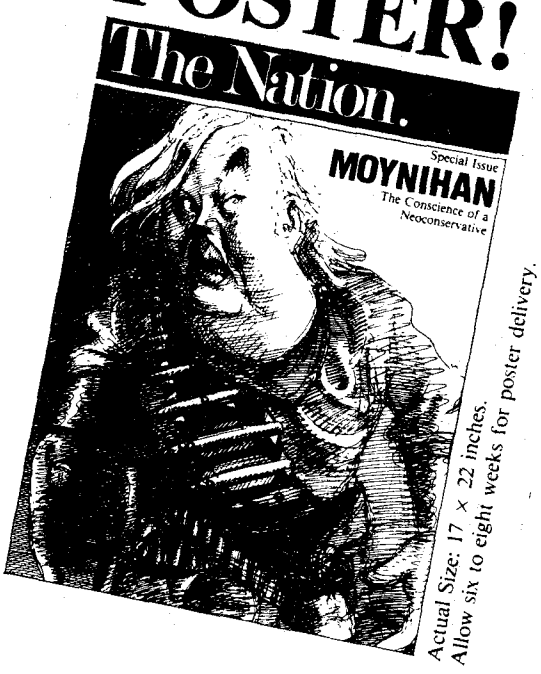
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DISCORDANT OVERTURES

U.S. and Vietnam—The Missed Chance

GARETH PORTER

In the summer of 1978, Vietnam transmitted clear signals through diplomatic channels that it was ready to normalize relations with the United States without the preconditions that had doomed previous normalization talks between the two former enemies. State Department officials were receptive. A resumption of diplomatic ties promised several dividends. Primary among them was the possibility of heading off confrontation between China and Vietnam as well as the concomitant shift to closer relations between Hanoi and Moscow.

But national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski immediately raised objections to U.S. recognition of Vietnam on geopolitical grounds. This opposition delayed a positive response to Hanoi's overtures until late September 1978. By that time, Vietnam's preparations for its December offensive against the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea had advanced too far to be halted.

The delayed response to the Vietnamese signal was only one of many missed opportunities on both sides that derailed diplomatic efforts, even though many policy makers in both countries favored normalization. A reconstruction of this chain of diplomatic moves shows a perverse pattern: every time one side was ready to take the diplomatic leap, opponents of normalization on the other side rallied to thwart a favorable response and stall negotiations.

Hanoi had missed what was perhaps its best opportunity in 1977. In the course of talks in Paris during May and June, Assistant Secretary of State for Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard Holbrooke offered the Vietnamese normalization without preconditions. But Hanoi demanded that U.S. aid for postwar reconstruction be part of the agreement. Hopeful that some symbolic gesture on postwar aid might be forthcoming from the United States, Hanoi did not modify its position even after it became clear that Congressional opposition made it impossible for the Carter Administration to meet the demand.

In late 1977, Vietnam missed another opportunity to reach quick agreement with the United States. At a time when U.S.-China normalization was still stalled over the Taiwan issue, Vietnam faced a serious border war with Kampuchea and rising tensions with China. But Vietnamese leaders suspected Washington of collaborating with China in a plot to foment trouble along the Kampuchean border, and decided to maintain its distance from Washington.

Even so, there was general agreement among party leaders that Vietnam needed trade relations with the United States. As one Hanoi official remarked privately to an American diplomat in 1978, "We could have computers from the Soviet Union for five years—and stay fifty years behind." Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach suggested to Holbrooke at an October 1977 meeting that the two sides search for a formula that would permit progress in U.S.-Vietnam relations despite the political obstacles on both sides and received the impression that Holbrooke was amenable to the idea. So at a meeting in Paris in December, Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister Phan Hien, who had negotiated with Holbrooke in the earlier meetings, proposed that the two sides exchange liaison missions on the Chinese-U.S. model and begin trade relations. But Holbrooke repeated the position he had taken in May and June: no trade until after embassies were established. "The Vietnamese looked surprised when Holbrooke told them it was impossible," said one U.S. official who participated in the talks.

It may have been Hanoi's last chance to establish quick normalization with the United States. In late January 1978, President Carter decided to send Brzezinski to China in May to reactivate negotiations on U.S.-China normalization. The trip marked a turning point in U.S. policy in the Far East. Brzezinski was the primary advocate in the Administration of using closer ties with China as leverage against the Russians. His specialist on China, Michael Oksenberg, was well known for his Sinocentric view of the world and his hostility toward Vietnam, which he once called "the cesspool of civilization." Oksenberg wrote the toast Brzezinski delivered in Peking expressing support for China's condemnation of "regional hegemony," a code phrase deliberately chosen to express opposition to Vietnam. The toast was not approved by Holbrooke, the highest-ranking State Department official on the trip, and the department protested to the White House that it went well beyond established policy toward the region.

Brzezinski informed Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping during private talks that Ambassador Leonard Woodcock would outline his country's views on U.S.-China normalization in a series of presentations beginning in the summer. The new China talks raised the issue of the sequence of the Carter Administration's major diplomatic initiatives. Holbrooke had previously told a journalist that 1978 would be the year of the Panama Canal, 1979 the year of SALT II and 1980 the year of China. But Brzezinski was now calling for normalization with China before a SALT II agreement, arguing that it would give the United States a stronger strategic position in negotiating with the Russians and help assure ratification of the treaty. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, however, cautioned against such a strategy on the ground that it would alarm Moscow and jeopardize the chances for an agreement.

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Just as the United States was embarking on a new negotiating track with China, Vietnam was shifting its policy toward the United States. In response to the crisis in relations with China, the Vietnamese Politburo decided in June that Pol Pot's Government must be crushed and that a major military buildup was necessary to prepare for possible war with China. For the first time, China was referred to within the party as Vietnam's "direct enemy." The United States and China were viewed, according to high-level Vietnamese officials, as having both parallel and competing interests in Asia. Hanoi was finally recognizing a fundamental strategic interest in diplomatic ties with Washington.

On July 11, after first informing Washington through the Indian and Japanese embassies, Deputy Foreign Minister Hien announced in Tokyo that Vietnam would no longer raise any preconditions to normalization of relations with the United States. But instead of formally requesting another meeting to discuss normalization, Hanoi announced that it awaited an American suggestion of a time and place. The Vietnamese were asking for a sign that the United States was still interested in normalization before going any further. The Vietnamese did communicate their new desire for normalization directly to Washington. Vietnamese officials attending a meeting in Hawaii on the identification of the remains of U.S. servicemen told a State Department official flatly that Hanoi was ready to drop its preconditions on normalization. But the Carter Administration adopted a policy of refusing to concede publicly that Vietnam had changed its policy, dismissing the Vietnamese statements in Hawaii as "unofficial." As one U.S. official later admitted, the United States was "hard of hearing" on the Vietnamese message.

Behind this public silence on Vietnam an internal debate was raging within the Administration. Brzezinski and Oksenberg pointed out that any move toward normalization with Vietnam before a diplomatic breakthrough with China would disturb Chinese leaders. As early as March 1977, when the Presidential mission headed by Leonard Woodcock was in Hanoi, a senior Chinese representative told an American official in Hong Kong that he could not understand why the United States was moving so quickly on relations with Vietnam at a time when negotiations with China were stalled. And Deng himself complained to Ambassador Woodcock after the May-June 1977 talks in Paris that he couldn't understand why the United States would want to have relations with Hanoi after having been defeated by the Vietnamese Communists in the war.

Furthermore, Brzezinski and Oksenberg contended that Hanoi had already chosen to cast its lot with the Soviet Union. As evidence, they cited Vietnam's decision to join COMECON, the Soviet-dominated economic bloc, on June 28, 1978. Oksenberg suggested that the Vietnamese might already be secretly obligated to give the Russians military bases. And Brzezinski portrayed the Kampuchean-Vietnamese conflict as a "proxy war" initiated by the Vietnamese on behalf of Moscow.

Assistant Secretary Holbrooke, the architect of the 1977 opening to Vietnam, countered that the Vietnamese were acting out of their own interests in opposing Pol Pot. (He had testified before Congress in March that it was a "serious misinterpretation" to see the conflict as a "proxy war.") He argued that the early establishment of U.S.-Vietnam relations would help stabilize the rapidly escalating Sino-Vietnamese conflict, moderating Chinese pressure on Vietnam while making the Vietnamese less panicky about Kampuchea.

But the main issue within the Administration, as Holbrooke told an associate in early August, was Vietnamese-Soviet relations. Holbrooke asked the Central Intelligence Agency in July to give him a comprehensive report on all information relating to Soviet military presence in Vietnam. When the C.I.A. reported that there was no evidence the Vietnamese had given the Russians a base at Cam Ranh Bay, as the Chinese had charged, the State Department took the unusual step of informing Hanoi, through the Australian Government, that the United States accepted its claim that it had not ceded bases to the Soviet Union. "The Vietnamese are overjoyed about this," said one State Department official in August. "They are telling everybody they see about it."

The debate on Vietnam within the Carter Administration was partially resolved in September, when Holbrooke was authorized to initiate talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Thach in New York during the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. But his instructions, while not directly posing conditions on normalization, drew an undefined relationship between the timing of normalization and Vietnamese policies toward Kampuchea and the Soviet Union.

When the meeting began on September 26, Thach, who had become Premier Pham Van Dong's personal adviser on foreign policy, raised the old Vietnamese demand for reconstruction aid. When he persisted on that tack two days later, it appeared that there had been no change in Vietnamese policy after all. Holbrooke warned bluntly: "We've reached the end of the road," according to a U.S. official present at the meeting. Thach then abruptly reversed himself and proposed normalization without preconditions. It soon became apparent that Thach had planned the switch from the start; after it was agreed that a small working group would draft a joint communiqué and work out details on housing and diplomatic privileges, he produced a draft joint communiqué that had obviously been drawn up beforehand.

When the discussions turned to the question of timing, Thach pressed for a signing in November. Holbrooke said he couldn't promise when a signing would take place, but that another meeting might be possible in November, following the Congressional elections. But Holbrooke added that Vietnamese actions in regard to Kampuchea or developments in relations with the Soviet Union could "complicate the normalization process." That caveat provided ample room for delay in case the Vietnamese occupied Kampuchea or moved closer to the Russians.

After the New York meeting, the Carter Administration addressed the question of the timetable for normalization

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with both China and Vietnam. On October 1, Carter decided that the United States would try to achieve an agreement with China by January 1, 1979. According to a well-informed Administration source, it was then decided that an agreement could be signed with Vietnam "within four to six weeks" after an agreement with China, provided Vietnam did not threaten to bring Kampuchea under its sway.

In Hanoi, meanwhile, Vietnamese leaders were puzzling over the problem of how to reconcile their plans for an invasion of Kampuchea and their desire to complete a normalization agreement with the United States. They knew that they would have to negotiate a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union as a deterrent against Chinese invasion before launching the attack against the Pol Pot forces. But they also knew that if the treaty with the Russians was signed before normalization with the United States was completed, it would be seized upon by Brzezinski and others opposed to normalization with Vietnam.

While Thach waited in New York for news of the next meeting or a response to the Vietnamese draft communiqué, pressure was mounting in Hanoi to push ahead with the diplomatic-military timetable. As Thach revealed earlier this year to a visiting American, the Vietnamese were growing anxious about the possibility that Phnom Penh, with Peking's encouragement, might expand its international contacts and polish up its international image to bolster its legitimacy. Sometime in October, Hanoi decided that there could be no further delay while Washington was determining its next move. At the end of October, Thach left New York, stopped over in Paris for a few hours, and then flew on to Moscow for high-level negotiations with the Russians.

The negotiations were reportedly marked by tough bargaining over unpublished annexes to the text of the treaty dealing with Soviet use of Vietnamese ports and military facilities. The Vietnamese resisted Soviet pressures for base rights, but conceded the right of Soviet ships to make port calls and to use air bases for refueling purposes. Vietnamese officials insisted that the treaty did not compromise Vietnamese independence. "We could have gone further," Thach told me on his return from Moscow, "but we have exercised restraint."

But the November 3 treaty, with a mutual security clause similar to the one the Russians negotiated with India in 1971, tipped the balance within the Administration over normalization with Vietnam. "That treaty gave Brzezinski and Oksenberg all the ammunition they needed," said a State Department official later. To make matters worse, a few days after the treaty was signed, a Soviet diplomat in Washington indicated to a State Department contact that the Vietnamese might have to launch a major "counter-attack" against Kampuchea, and tried to sound him out on the State Department's views on such an offensive.

Still another obstacle to normalization arose in November: the number of boat people departing from Vietnam and arriving in Southeast Asian countries, which had jumped from about 1,000 a week in August to about 3,000 a week in October, swelled to more than 5,000 a week in November. Most of the emigrants were ethnic Chinese, and the Hanoi Government appeared to be encouraging the exodus and unofficially processing the departures.

Even before the next U.S.-Vietnam meeting at the end of November, the battle had been won by opponents of normalization, according to Administration sources. The State Department argued successfully that the United States could not question Vietnam's right to sign a bilateral treaty with another country. So Holbrooke's deputy, Robert Oakley, merely asked for "clarification" of the implications of the Soviet treaty, rather than asserting that the treaty would make immediate normalization impossible, as Brzezinski was urging. But the Vietnamese were warned that their policies toward Kampuchea and the boat people would influence the normalization process.

A few days after the November talks, the Vietnamese Mission to the United Nations in New York was informed that no further progress on normalization was possible. Despite Vietnamese denials that it had any intention of invading Kampuchea, U.S. intelligence showed that such an invasion was set to begin during the dry season, starting in December. The invasion began on December 26 and culminated in the entrance of Vietnamese troops into Phnom Penh on January 6.

The American decision to make normalization conditional, in effect, on Vietnam's Kampuchean policy now posed a long-term obstacle to U.S. ties with Vietnam. The dilemma that policy decision created was articulated at a conference of U.S. East Asian Chiefs of Mission in Bangkok shortly after the fall of Phnom Penh. The Mission Chiefs, informed that the U.S. condition for resuming talks with the Vietnamese was the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, agreed that normalization of relations with Vietnam would benefit the United States by giving it some leverage—or at least a channel of communication—with Hanoi during crises like the one with Kampuchea, and that it would reduce Vietnamese dependence on the Russians.

By the end of January, another consequence of American policy began to emerge: by treating Vietnam as a pariah state, the United States was aligning itself more closely with Chinese policy toward Vietnam and encouraging Peking to proceed with its invasion of Vietnam. Official U.S. warnings that such an invasion was too risky were shrugged off by the Chinese who believed—with considerable evidence—that Washington actually shared their view of Vietnam as the cause of the tensions in the region. While the Carter Administration reacted to the Chinese invasion by attempting to establish a somewhat more evenhanded posture, it remained frozen into a pro-China, anti-Vietnam tilt by its refusal to normalize relations with Vietnam.

Within the Administration, the argument over U.S. policy toward normalization with Vietnam continues. Some officials still say that if the United States had established relations with Vietnam before plans for the Kampuchean invasion had been completed, the events of January and February 1979 could have been avoided. "If we had moved in early enough," says one State Department man, "the dynamics between Vietnam and its neighbors might well

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have been different." Oksenberg, on the other hand, is known to believe that Vietnam's decisions on the Soviet Union and China were made early in 1978 and would not have been affected by American policy.

The Vietnamese appear to have conducted their own post-mortem on Hanoi's diplomacy. Asked by a visiting Congressman in August why Vietnam had failed to normalize relations with the United States in 1977, one Foreign Ministry official simply shrugged and said, "You make mistakes, we make mistakes." □

DECONTROLLED GREED

Heating Oil Goes Through the Roof

FRED J. COOK

The howl you hear is that of winter coming—a howl that is certain to be swelled by the cries of human anguish and despair at heating oil bills that represent the ultimate rip-off of the American homeowner; heating oil bills that will be so high, departing Deputy Energy Secretary John O'Leary recently told a Congressional committee, that the American poor and elderly may have to choose between heating and eating.

The Carter Administration talks about ameliorating the potential human disaster through a Federal program to pay part of the heating costs of the needy. But Carter's proposed $2.4 billion aid package depends primarily upon Congressional passage of an undiluted windfall profits tax, most of which wouldn't become effective before the winter of 1980-81; it would help only those with incomes hovering around the poverty level—and even they would get only about $200 a year, not enough to fill a small oil tank once.

The grim reality which this oil-oriented Administration refuses to face may be encapsulated in these terms:

§ By mid-August, according to O'Leary himself, heating oil had zoomed to an average price of 80 cents a gallon. What O'Leary did not tell Congress was that fuel oil was continuing to rise at the rate of 1 cent per gallon a week—an escalation that, unless stopped, will bring us heating oil priced at more than $1 a gallon before spring.

§ The potential human cost is appalling. Not much has been written in the United States about hypothermia, a fatal affliction of the elderly when the cold in an unheated house causes body temperatures to drop suddenly, but state energy commissioners and Congressional energy experts, especially from states in the Northeast where heating oil is the principal fuel, are extremely worried that thousands of deaths may result. Hypothermia kills rapidly and is sometimes mistaken for a heart attack, but British studies, the best that have been made, show that thousands do die annually from hypothermia and that 10 percent of the elderly are at risk. In American terms, that means some 2.5 million of our elderly could be potential victims.

§ This prescription for human suffering has been written by major oil companies that have so far failed to justify their runaway refinery profits. Even O'Leary, one of the Department of Energy's many apologists for Big Oil, conceded in a Congressional hearing on September 5 that his department has "strong though not conclusive evidence" that a major cause of rising heating oil prices are price boosts at the refineries. He insisted, however, that he didn't have enough evidence to call the refinery profits "price gouging."

Perhaps O'Leary should have looked more closely at his own department's records. In August 1978, a broad-based evidentiary hearing was conducted by Melvin Goldstein, a hearing officer in the D.O.E.'s Hearings and Appeals Division. There were two significant abstentions. The American Petroleum Institute, the industry spokesman, declined to participate for reasons Goldstein found "fallacious," and the Atlantic Richfield Company (Arco) withdrew because, it said, it was willing to let its position be represented by the Office of Fuels Regulation of the D.O.E. Arco's confidence was not misplaced. The oil companies themselves could not have fought the hated idea of controls more vigorously than did witnesses for the D.O.E. and the Justice Department. Justice even opposed "a continuing [price] monitoring program." The National Oil Jobbers, as expected, also opposed controls. The lone dissenters from the united front were witnesses for the Energy Policy Task Force of the Consumer Federation of America.

Even this stacked deck couldn't improve the oil industry's hand. The D.O.E.'s own price figures showed that, in the first two years after the Ford Administration obligingly decontrolled heating oil on July 1, 1976, prices jumped 23 percent compared with a 12.5 percent rise in the Consumer Price Index. The D.O.E.'s figures also showed that refinery prices in the same period rose 23 percent more than the increase in their costs. Goldstein found no evidence of competition at the refinery level and pointed out that the American Petroleum Institute should have presented such proof if it had it. "The allegations and evidence in the record that petroleum refiners do not engage in active competition have not been rebutted," he wrote, and he ruled that "the burden [of proof] should now be on the industry." The Justice Department, which throughout the Carter Administration has demonstrated no overwhelming passion to act, had argued against controls and insisted that the only proper remedy lay in antitrust action. Goldstein batted down this contention, writing: "Since it is unlikely that antitrust remedies would provide a sufficiently effective response over the next several years, it would appear that price controls would provide the most desirable response to the situation."

Goldstein's report, filed in December 1978, when heating oil prices were already going into their most dizzying escala-

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tion, met with no favor in a department that considered controls anathema. His report was shelved, and the D.O.E. conducted its own rebuttal "study." This exercise, completed in March 1979, parroted the oil companies' line, adopting in its rationale assertions that the industry itself had not had the temerity to raise in Goldstein's hearings. Goldstein had concluded that there had probably been $331 million in heating oil overcharges in the first two years of decontrol, but the D.O.E. "study" argued that the oil companies had "incurred more increased costs than increased revenues." This was attributable to the "seasonality" of the heating oil business, the D.O.E. explained. The unfortunate oil companies had to stockpile heating oil in summer to meet winter's demands and so incurred "banked costs" before they could sell their product. The asininity of this official verdict would become transparent in the summer of 1979, when heating oil prices rose a penny a week per gallon and those "banked costs" were transmuted into fatter profits the longer deliveries were delayed.

The effect of this entire D.O.E. charade was to give the oil industry carte blanche to charge whatever it wanted. Heating oil prices sped up at an unprecedented pace through the 1978-79 winter—and kept right on rising throughout the summer. The office of Energy Commissioner James Larocca in Albany, which has been constantly monitoring fuel oil prices, documents what happened. Larocca's figures show that, even after the Arab oil embargo of 1973-74, fuel oil was selling at 19 cents a gallon. It remained relatively cheap until the Ford decontrol action in 1976. After decontrol, Larocca's studies show, the *average* price in New York State jumped to 41.5 cents a gallon. This was only the beginning. By August 1, 1978, these "average prices" had risen to 48.9 cents a gallon—and the really big takeoff was just ahead. A year later, on August 1, 1979, the "average price" stood at 78.4 cents—a jump of 29.5 cents in a single year. Larocca's experts emphasized that the "average price" scale didn't tell the whole story. The highest prices being paid reached 81.9 cents on July 25, 1979, and three weeks later, by August 8, they had soared to 87 cents.

Some states presented an even darker picture. In Connecticut, for example, the state energy office reported that August heating oil prices were averaging 83.4 cents a gallon, almost a 60 percent increase from the 55 cents that had been charged as recently as January and February 1979. In Massachusetts, the average price was 85 cents; in Oregon, 83 cents. In hardly any state was the average price as low as the 80 cents that Deputy Secretary O'Leary had told Congress was the national average.

A penny-a-week hike in oil prices may not seem like much, but it translates into millions of dollars. A Larocca spokesman says: "In this state, half the homes and apartments are heated with oil. Every increase of a penny a gallon in home-heating oil, therefore, costs the consumers of this state another $37 million on an annual basis." The jump of 29.5 cents a gallon in the average price of heating oil means that, on an annual basis, more than $1 billion is being added to the cash flow of the oil industry in New York State alone.

Where are prices going to go unless some lid is put on them by the Federal Government or (a preposterous thought, given their track record) by the oil companies themselves? "Just figure out how many weeks there are in the heating season, add a penny a week to the cost of oil—and that's where you're going to come out," Larocca's expert says. If one takes an average heating season, beginning in the Northeast in October and lasting probably into May—a span of some thirty-two weeks—this means that the price of heating oil next spring might wind up as high as $1.12 a gallon. Even if the penny-a-week gallop should slow somewhat, Gov. Hugh Carey was probably justified when he charged that 1979 oil prices would end up being double those at the beginning of the 1978 heating season.

Other sources contend that even Larocca's penny-a-week equation is too conservative. Representative William Hughes, Democrat from New Jersey, a member of the energy subcommittee chaired by Connecticut Democrat Toby Moffett, insists that New Jersey prices rose 5 cents a month throughout the summer while refineries held back on deliveries—their excuse being that they had to stockpile oil to meet the D.O.E.'s requirement that they have 240 million barrels on hand by October 31 to prevent a winter shortage. And, of course, while the refineries were obligingly stockpiling, their liquid hoard was increasing in value like gold bullion on the Swiss exchange. Representative Moffett's office adds that heating oil has been jumping in price in Connecticut at more than a cent a week, and his staff (like Larocca's in New York) is extremely worried about the possible toll hypothermia may take among the elderly. Moffett's energy analyst concludes: "This steady increase in prices is very frightening. There are a lot of people who just can't afford to pay a dollar a gallon for heating oil. I talked to many last winter who had turned off every room in the house that they could and had kept the thermostat down in the 60s to get by. There is nothing more they can do, and they are caught in a hopeless situation." Representative Hughes, who has received "thousands of letters" from his South Jersey constituents (including many middle-class citizens) protesting high oil prices, was incensed that a half-dozen of the largest oil companies called to testify before Moffett's committee "haven't been able to justify their prices."

The industry's alibi is always presented in generalities. A Gulf Oil Corporation witness testified before Moffett's committee on September 5, for example, that higher prices were the result of higher costs. Not only had OPEC raised the price of oil, not only were labor and production costs higher, but the oil companies, he said, were faced with the necessity of making heavy investments in new refineries and, besides, much of the oil they are now getting is of poorer quality and so requires much more refining. And so on and so on. But specific figures? None.

If these shadowy costs were so high, then why were the refineries making more money than ever? According to Bruce Lazier of the Paine Webber Mitchell Hutchins brokerage firm, quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*: "The past year has been one of the most profitable in refining history, both in the United States and foreign areas. In the year's first half, profits of the top twenty-five oil companies

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averaged gains of 66 percent over year-earlier levels, and a large part of those gains came from refining." *The Journal* cited independent D.O.E. figures indicating that refineries had greatly increased the spread between their crude oil costs and their selling prices. This margin had been 6 cents a gallon in May 1978; 7.6 cents in January 1979—and over 11 cents in May 1979. Industry sources indicated to *The Journal* that the refinery take had gone up to 14 cents a gallon since May, perhaps as much as 16 cents—at any rate, virtually double what it had been at the beginning of the year. And *The Journal* pointed out that every penny-a-gallon increase in heating oil prices produces some $200 million annually in added oil company revenues.

While refineries kept blithely raising their prices, soaring fuel costs led to widespread anger and frustration—and to dire predictions by municipal officials in close touch with the situation. In Newark, Mayor Kenneth Gibson said: "We're afraid—and we don't think we're hitting the panic button—of people freezing." In Hartford, Deputy Mayor Nicholas Carbone reported that roughly half of the city's households were on fixed incomes averaging $331 a month. There is no way persons with such limited incomes can pay for heat at present prices, and Carbone fears "massive abandonment of the only housing stock available to the poor." In the past year, he added, abandoned housing units in Hartford increased 59 percent "in large part due to energy costs."

The crisis has its genesis on the wholesale, not the retail, level. Fuel dealers, whose customers are switching to natural gas by the thousands, have no choice but to keep their prices as low as possible. But they find themselves caught in an intolerable bind between the ability of their customers to pay and the insistence of refineries on virtually C.O.D. payments. One New Jersey oil dealer whom I know well described the double bind to me in early September. He was then selling fuel oil at 81 cents a gallon, a mere 8-cent markup over his 73-cent wholesale price. And his supplier would advance him only a $15,000 line of credit. "That's good for only one day in the wintertime," he said. "When I protest, you know what they tell me? 'Why don't you go to the bank and borrow $50,000 or $60,000?' What—at 13 or 14 percent? The hell with it. That would put me out of business. So I'm going to have to run on a strictly C.O.D. basis."

This dealer estimates that already 20 percent of his customers have switched to natural gas, a fuel that at September prices was more than one-third cheaper than oil. "I'll probably lose another 15 percent of my customers who just can't pay me on a C.O.D. basis at these prices," this dealer says. "But what can you do? If I deliver 1,000 gallons of oil on credit—and get hung up for it—I can't stay in business." (In Connecticut, Gov. Ella Grasso was considering calling the General Assembly into a special session before January to try to arrange state financing for dealers caught between the oil companies' stringent credit terms and the banks' high interest rates.)

The forlorn hope that the oil companies might voluntarily freeze their prices this winter was dashed in the Texaco fiasco, when an overeager President Carter embraced a pledge from Texaco promising to make "every effort" to hold its prices. It turned out, of course, that the "freeze" statement was almost meaningless, since the pledge would expire on January 1, and in any case, as John Galloway, a staff member of Moffett's energy subcommittee, pointed out, Texaco's prices "are among the highest in the country." It took the threat of a subpoena for Texaco to agree to appear at the next hearing of Moffett's committee on the question of heating oil prices.

Whether such an appearance will yield any meaningful information remains doubtful, for the oil companies have fought like a whole corral of bucking broncos against disclosing anything about their price structures and practices. They contend that this is "proprietary" information to which neither the Government nor the public is entitled. "The oil companies won't break down their costs, but the burden of proof shouldn't be on the consumers," a spokesman for Representative Moffett says. "The burden of proof should have been on the companies to justify their prices or prices shouldn't have been decontrolled in the first place."

The logic is impeccable, but the oil companies have stonewalled state energy commissioners, the D.O.E., the Justice Department—and Congress itself. Their most bla-

Adding Up the Bill

How much has the heating oil rip-off cost the American homeowner? Some $2.4 billion since controls were lifted in 1976. The figure comes from the Consumer Energy Council of America. James L. Feldesman, attorney for the council, testifying before the Economic Regulatory Administration of the Department of Energy in Washington on September 26, upbraided the D.O.E. for blithely disregarding all of Melvin Goldstein's findings after the 1978 hearing. Feldesman protested the current "terribly limited proceeding" which the D.O.E. has confined to "methodology." The Consumer Energy Council, he said, had made three different analyses of heating oil prices. In one, using the industry's own methods of computation, Feldesman said, the council concluded that heating oil today should cost no more than 65.8 cents a gallon—19 cents less than its present price. If heating oil had been controlled, with companies allowed to "pass through" all legitimate costs, the price would be 58.4 cents a gallon—26.6 cents less than current charges. Feldesman charged that the D.O.E. "whitewashed the incredible increases in price since the beginning of this year" and said that, if current trends persist for another year, consumers will be overcharged an additional $4.2 billion to $5.9 billion for heating oil alone.

F.J.C.

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tant exercise in stonewalling occurred in the U.S. District Court in Wilmington, Delaware, during the summer. Congress had specifically ordered the Office of Energy Information and Analysis of the D.O.E. to set up a Financial Reporting System but the companies sought an injunction prohibiting the Government from collecting or disseminating this information.

Mark Rutzick and a team of Justice Department lawyers argued the case, and on August 17, Federal Judge Walter Stapleton ruled that one of the functions of the original Federal Energy Administration, as mandated by Congress, was to "promote free and open competition in all aspects of the energy field, *prevent unreasonable profits within various segments of the energy industry and promote free enterprise*" (italics added). In its later legislation specifically ordering the collection of F.R.S. data, Judge Stapleton noted, Congress had recognized that "antitrust information concerning the energy industry is energy planning data. . . . The energy statutes . . . clearly evidence the view of Congress that the presence or absence of competition in the energy industry is of crucial importance to energy planning and that the presence of competition is essential to attainment of the goals of that legislation." Judge Stapleton concluded that Congress had not only given the D.O.E. the authority to obtain information but also to disclose it to other relevant Government agencies like the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission. The oil companies have appealed.

The persistent tactics of delay and obfuscation by the oil companies make one wonder. If their operations were clean and aboveboard, why would they go to such extremes to hide the details? Common sense says that the oil companies are desperately trying to cover up the rip-off of the American consumer. And in that context, there is probably no more vivid example than the saga of the double tilt.

When I first began to probe the heating oil scandal in January 1978 (see Cook, "The Great Heating Oil Price Mystery," *The Nation*, January 6-13, 1979), I was intrigued by two circumstances. For fifty years, to my knowledge, heating oil had been one of the cheapest products of the refineries; it had always sold for about one third, never more than half, of the price of gasoline at the pump. Gasoline, of course, bears state and Federal taxes as heating oil does not; and when I deducted the tax differential, I found that the oil companies' take from heating oil was more than what they were getting for the more highly refined gasoline. When I questioned this, I ran into the first "tilt."

The big oil companies had imported and produced so much petroleum in 1977 that there was a market glut. Edmund Renner, executive vice president of the Fuel Merchants Association of New Jersey, wrote that since heating oil had been decontrolled, "Major companies 'tilted' production costs to fuel oil for the winter 1976-77 season." And since the Federal Government kept price ceilings on gasoline (Renner ignored the fact that there was so much gasoline it was selling *below* the price ceilings), "major producers were *forced* [italics added] to include certain production costs of both gasoline and fuel oil in fuel oil prices because of the language of the control legislation." Irving Oelbaum, director of operations for the New Jersey Department of Energy, conceded that "there is a price war on in gasoline at the present time which results in less than the normal price for it." An assistant administrator in the D.O.E. repeated the same line about excessive gasoline supplies making it impossible for dealers to charge "maximum ceiling prices" for it. Once one pierced the fog screen of the alibis, however, one fact was clear: the oil companies were tilting their costs and taking excessive profits from home-heating oil because they had produced so much gasoline they couldn't get the prices up.

Now, of course, the situation has altered drastically. With gasoline selling for $1 or more a gallon, those gasoline prices are certainly "up." So what happened to that old tilt imposed on fuel oil because gasoline prices were too low? As the figures of this summer's price escalation show, Tilt Number One kept right on tilting at a merrier pace than ever. It did so despite the fact that, last March, the Federal Government had granted the oil industry Tilt Number Two, letting gasoline prices rise. This made James Lee, president of Gulf Oil, very happy. In a speech to the Oil Analysts Group of New York on June 18, 1979, he said: "Beginning in March . . . the D.O.E. has granted belated regulatory relief called 'tilt,' which enables us to recover increased refinery costs at the gasoline pump. Taken alone, this would mean an additional 3½ to 4 cents a gallon on Gulf's gasoline and would provide us with approximately $250 million a year in additional pretax income."

One can see, of course, why Mr. Lee was happy. That extra $250 million a year would be enough to raise the spirits of any man. But logic would seem to say that Tilt Number Two should have wiped out the necessity for Tilt Number One on home-heating oil. But did it? Everyone knows it didn't. My last fuel delivery in May was billed at 69.9 cents a gallon. When my dealer returned in September to top off my tank, the price was 79.9 cents a gallon. Tilt Number One had tilted me for an additional 10 cents in a little more than three months—and my prices were lower, my tilt less, than some. No wonder the oil companies are fighting like harpooned whales to keep the Government and the public from finding out just what the Double Tilt has cost, just how badly everybody is being ripped off. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Oedipus Cowed

FRANK DONNER

THE BUREAU: My Thirty Years in Hoover's FBI. *By William Sullivan and Bill Brown. W.W. Norton & Company. 286 pp. $12.95.*

This is a sad book. And not only because its principal author was killed in a hunting accident in November 1977. William Sullivan, an intelligence specialist who headed the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Domestic Intelligence Division for ten years, manages to tell us very little that we didn't already know about the F.B.I. and its sick Director. Posthumously compiled from conversations, this ghost-written (in more than a metaphorical sense) memoir is best described as a plea for absolution for sins its author claims he committed under duress.

To the familiar confessional modes of bureaucratic intelligence literature—the disillusioned defector, the hyped-up tale-spinner, the triumphant, angry, rueful or chuckling survivor—Sullivan adds the anguished howl of the maverick. Throughout his career in the F.B.I. hierarchy, Sullivan played the role of in-house gadfly, the loyal opposition, cautiously critical but sometimes too outspoken for his own good. But these relatively rare outbursts were attributed to eccentricity ("Crazy Billy"), and in any event did not prevent him from being designated Hoover's vicar with the departure of Cartha DeLoach in 1970. (To be sure, Clyde Tolson was technically number two, but by that time he had suffered a series of disabling strokes which put him out of the running.) One encounters types like Sullivan in all highly controlled bureaucratic structures: the professional who outgrows the established milieu of his agency, chafes at its backwardness, but in the end surrenders to it. But even such light wing-flutterings were rare in the Director's domain. The Director was the absolute father-ruler of a family of agents bent to his will by the power of his personality and fear of jeopardizing extremely well-paid jobs. History miscast Sullivan in the role of Hoover-slayer and placed the cudgel of Oedipus in the wrong hands. His dreams of defiance were thwarted by fear of Hoover's fury and the dangers to his own career. Memorandums reflect Sullivan's conviction that the Director's priorities and methods had undermined intelligence as a useful weapon against radicalism. But his transient discontents were salved by intellectual vanity and his pride in devising intelligence actions more imaginative than the common run of F.B.I. operations.

Sullivan objected particularly to the Director's primitive standards of target selection (such as the National Council of Churches), his power-centered maneuvers (such as the expansion of the F.B.I.'s foreign "legat" network), his exaggeration of the Red menace and his feud with the Central Intelligence Agency. In a sense, Sullivan's discontents are symptomatic of the conflict between the homespun F.B.I. style and the professionalism embodied in the C.I.A. On the surface, the conflict appeared to reflect a long overdue challenge by an infidel to an outworn religion and was so viewed by many liberals. But Sullivan's gods were far more destructive than Hoover's. What Sullivan wanted was carte blanche for a professionalism in which break-ins, wiretaps and mail openings, for example, would be routinely used to rout the subversive enemy. His unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Director to continue the aggressive COINTELPRO's (Counterintelligence Program) dirty tricks when Hoover saw the handwriting of disapproval on the wall is a measure of the difference between this reckless *fantasiste* and his more cautious chief. But despite differences in target priorities and style, what bound the two men together was stronger than what separated them: the conviction, enfolded in a passionate self-righteousness, that their patriotism justified whatever actions they considered necessary to combat subversion. Sullivan's eagerness to replace the crudities of Hoover's intelligence style with more elegant, imaginative methods missed the simple point that operations against an armed adversary or a foreign spy could not be readily adapted for use against powerless and peaceful domestic dissidents.

Sullivan was a highly conflicted soul and the clue to his psychic torment was the abject quality of his capitulation whenever his candor backfired. The most notable example of this syndrome emerged during the civil rights movement. In August 1963, two years after he took command of the Domestic Intelligence Division, Sullivan submitted a seventy-page memorandum, prepared in response to Hoover's request in connection with the August 28 March on Washington, concluding that the Communists had failed to make a significant impact on the civil rights movement. The formal submission of the report followed Sullivan's negative memo to Attorney General Robert Kennedy in response to a request for verification of charges by Southern Congressmen that the Bureau had found the civil rights movement to be subversively infiltrated. Hoover exploded in fury when he read the Sullivan memorandums and Sullivan swiftly capitulated.

In a memorandum composed the day after the March on Washington for transmission to the Director, Sullivan wrote: "The Director is correct. . . . We greatly regret that the memorandum did not measure up to what the Director has a right to expect from our analysis." The repentant intelligence chief pointed out that there was no yardstick for measuring Communist influence, but that this difficulty could be overcome: "There are many Negroes who are fellow travelers, sympathizers who aid the party knowingly or unknowingly, but do not qualify as members. These we must ignore. The old Communist principle still holds: 'Communism must be built with non-Communist hands.' "

A subsequent memorandum of September 16, 1963, from the still abject Sullivan, proposed a major program to be called Communist Influence in Radical Matters (CIRM) which would use "all possible investigative techniques" (including counterintelligence practices) to neutralize such influence. After initially rejecting the proposal with a sarcastic comment ("No. I can't understand how you can agilely switch your thinking and evaluation"), Hoover

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relented when Sullivan once again humbled himself and begged for an opportunity to "do everything that is humanly possible to develop all facts nationwide relative to the Communist penetration and influence over Negro leaders and their organizations." The Director noted, "I am glad that you recognize at last that there is such an influence," and on a subsequent memorandum proposing an aggressive counterintelligence program, he wrote, "I am glad to see that light has finally, though dismally delayed, come to the Domestic Int. Div. I struggled for months to get over the fact that the Communists were taking over the racial movement. But [Sullivan] couldn't or wouldn't see it."

Hoover's repeated needling of Sullivan is explained by something more than his "normal" sadism in dealing with aberrant subordinates. Rumors of his own displacement had made the Director especially dependent on the support of Southern allies on the Hill who were preparing themselves for the debate over the measure that ultimately became the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Hoover desperately needed intelligence materials to establish the subversive character of the integration movement both to vindicate himself and to help his allies. So Sullivan had been not merely misguided but (far, far worse) "disloyal." In order to bolster Hoover's Congressional testimony and to provide ammunition for his allies on the Hill, Sullivan instructed his newly launched CIRM project to step up the identification of all black members of the Communist Party. The desperation of Sullivan's campaign to discredit the civil rights movement is perhaps most dramatically illustrated by the Bureau's bizarre pursuit of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Under Bureau scrutiny since 1941, the N.A.A.C.P. was slim pickings for a COMINFIL (Communist Infiltration) program. Moderate in goals and tactics and hostile to Communism, its principal contribution to the civil rights struggle was a highly effective program of litigation. Yet in 1965, the Bureau intensified its probe of the N.A.A.C.P. in a special nationwide drive. Bureau field offices were exhorted to find evidence of Communist influence and to re-examine earlier reports clearing the group of subversive taint. Confidential sources and informers (151 in all) were mobilized to "follow and report all efforts by the Communist Party to infiltrate the N.A.A.C.P." both nationally and locally.

Sullivan knew that the surest way to make amends for the folly of the August memorandum and to regain Hoover's favor was to neutralize Martin Luther King Jr., Hoover's (literal) bête noire. So he contritely told the Director, "We must mark him [King] now, if we have not done so before, as the most dangerous Negro to the future of this Nation from the standpoint of Communism, the Negro and national security." On October 18, 1963, Alan Belmont, Assistant Director, began, with the Director's approval, to distribute to the White House and to a number of executive agencies a document entitled "Communism and the Negro Movement —A Current Analysis," drafted by Sullivan and intended to discredit King. The personal character of the attack outraged the Attorney General and he ordered the document withdrawn on October 25, 1963. This disapproval was not altogether unanticipated. In a memo dated October 17, Belmont had written: "This memorandum may startle the Attorney General, particularly in view of his past association with King, and the fact that we are disseminating this outside the Department. He may resent this. Nevertheless, the memorandum is a *powerful warning against Communist influence in the Negro movement* and we will be carrying out our responsibility by disseminating it to the people indicated in the attached memorandum." Robert Kennedy's disapproval was hardly a deterrent either to Hoover or to Sullivan, who was finally emerging from the doghouse eager for the Director's blessings. During the Johnson years, at least four updated editions of Sullivan's memo circulated with White House approval.

At the close of 1963, Sullivan convened a high-level conference which met for nine hours, reviewing anti-King proposals, and shortly thereafter sent Assistant Director Belmont a memorandum with the fruits of his "thinking about this matter" which proposed the removal of King from his "pedestal" and his replacement by the "right kind of a national Negro leader. . . ." The exceptional qualifications of his proposed candidate, Sullivan wrote to Belmont on January 8, 1964, had become apparent after he had explored the matter "from a philosophical and sociological standpoint. . . ." He subsequently told the Church committee on intelligence, "I am very proud of this memorandum, one of the best I ever wrote. I think here I was showing some concern for the country."

On January 4, 1964, Sullivan's Domestic Intelligence Division began implementing its anti-King program by installing a microphone in King's room at the Willard Hotel for the specific purpose of developing information about King's private life. Additional information was obtained through surreptitious entries into the room and by photographic surveillance. (On one occasion, a specimen of King's handwriting was obtained.) Informers (including one who had admittedly embezzled Southern Christian Leadership Conference funds) were also used to penetrate the S.C.L.C. and to report on King's activities. The fruits of this coverage, along with the tape, were included in packets for subversion-cum-immorality briefings for legislators and journalists. In November 1964, Sullivan implemented his plan to send to Coretta King edited material from the tape with the intention of breaking up the marriage and silencing King's criticism of the Bureau. Mailed from Tampa, Florida, with elaborate security precautions, it was accompanied by a note to King stating that "there is only one thing left for you to do" to prevent the threatened release of the tape in thirty-four days (when King was scheduled to receive the formal award of the Nobel Peace Prize). That the letter was an invitation to commit suicide (as King's associates interpreted it) seems reasonably clear from its wording: "There is but one way out for you. You better take it before your filthy, fraudulent self is bared to the nation." Although Sullivan undoubtedly drafted the letter, he denied it, despite the fact that an original version was found in his files.

The extent of Hoover's dominance is dramatized by Sullivan's role in the Huston Plan. In 1966, Sullivan protested Hoover's ban on "black bag," illegal entries. He then helped draft the Huston Plan which (briefly) restored this and other outlawed practices. First he deceived Hoover about his role in drafting the document, falsely portraying himself as the embattled defender of the Director and the Bureau against efforts by other members of Tom Charles Huston's panel (the Inter-Agency Ad Hoc Committee) to expand the F.B.I.'s operational scope. Then, when the pro-

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posal was circulated, he falsely informed the Director that he had opposed it from the beginning. The harsh voice of the Director cowed Sullivan even from the grave. Thus, although he told a newsman that toward the end Hoover had slipped into madness, he quickly retracted the statement after a denunciation by the Director's Congressional supporters and wrote an encomium for inclusion in the *Congressional Record*.

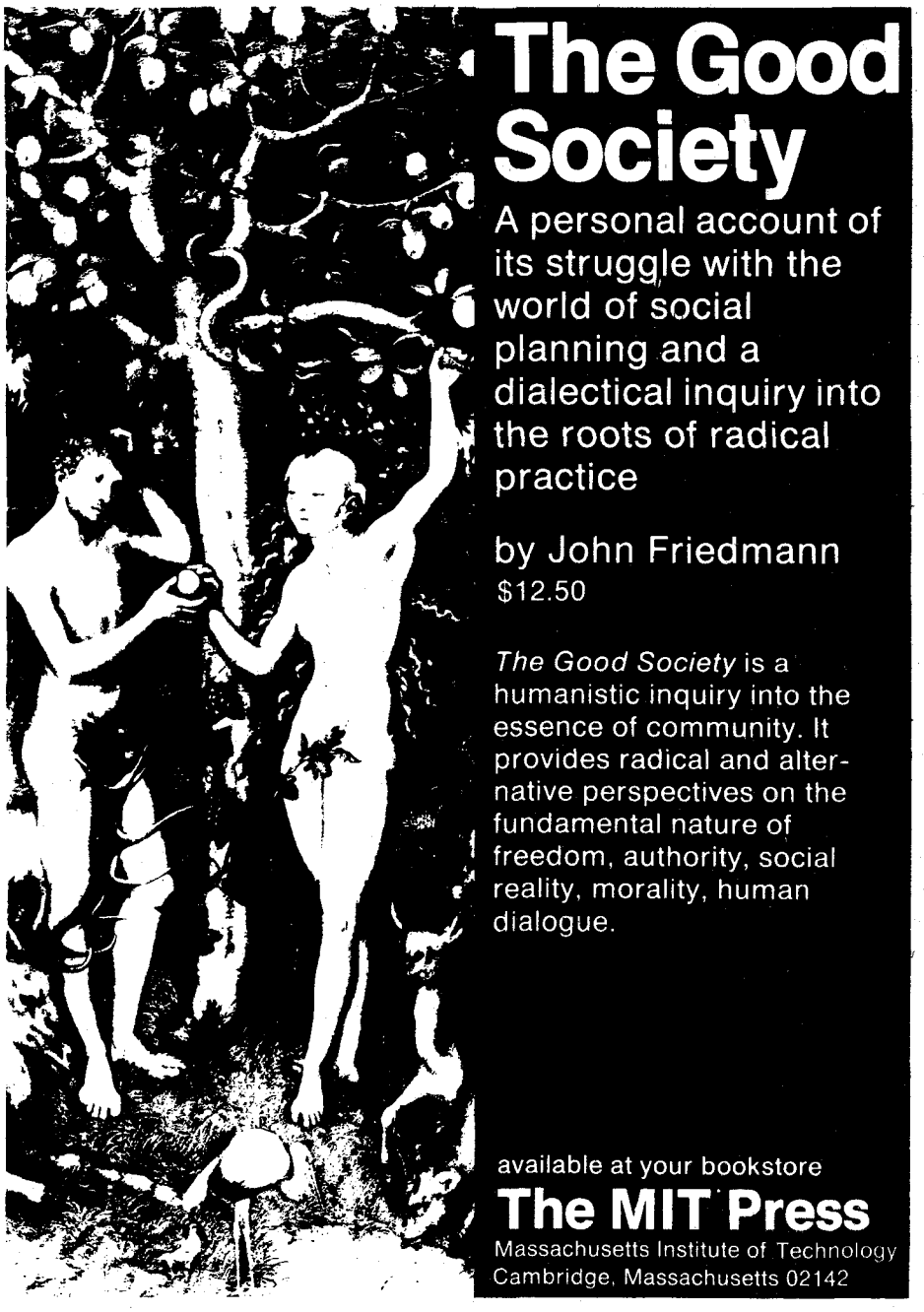
Sullivan's obsequiousness persisted after Hoover's death. He secretly provided the Nixon White House with a list of precedents for surreptitious entries against domestic targets from prior administrations (principally L.B.J.'s) for use in its defense of the Watergate break-in and in the break-in at the office of Dr. Lewis Fielding, Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. President Johnson's Attorneys General, Nicholas Katzenbach and Ramsey Clark, denied knowledge of such practices. In 1975, in a changed climate, Sullivan—a veritable chameleon—did an about-face and insisted that it was Clark's repeated rejection of Hoover's requests to burglarize a diplomatic site that led to the 1966 ukase against burglaries. Sullivan's last word on this subject was his grand jury testimony in the Kearney case in August 1977, stating that Hoover had not totally banned burglaries in 1966 but had reauthorized them in the early 1970s as a desperate measure to apprehend the Weather Underground fugitives.

Sullivan was the guiding spirit in the COINTELPRO operations which he subsequently justified in an interview as a means of saving the taxpayers' money. Why fool around with tedious, expensive, passive surveillance when you could really hurt the target at small cost? When he took over in 1961 he made COINTELPRO a major concern of the intelligence division, issuing numerous memorandums exhorting the agents to show greater boldness and imagination in devising new dirty tricks. In August 1967 he approved a program directed at black groups, and in March 1968 it was expanded from twenty-three to forty-one field offices in a letter from Sullivan which put flesh on its bones: "An effective coalition of black nationalist groups," the letter warned with chilling hyperbole, "might be a first step toward a real 'Mau Mau' in America, the beginnings of a true black revolution."

The ecumenical range of targets under this program was matched by goals including fomenting internal factionalism and external rivalries, incitement to violence, the instigation of pretext raids and arrests by local city police, the vandalization of publications, the organization of heckling claques, and the use of *provocateurs*, anonymous letters, snitch-jackets, cartoons, forgery, burglary, sexual exploitation, impersonation, defamation, blackmail and extortion.

What Sullivan added to the old Bureau tactics against black nationalists was a stress on punitive action against individuals. This motif echoes in the priority he gave to the need to "prevent the *rise of a 'messiah'* who could unify and electrify the militant black nationalist movement. . . ." (Italics in original.) For the first time, an aggressive intelligence program listed individual targets by name; agents were explicitly exhorted to "pinpoint potential troublemakers," to make a census of area leaders of the black nationalist movement and check it against the Bureau's "Rabble-Rouser Index" in order to identify targets for aggressive action. This uniquely personalized emphasis eloquently bespeaks a racism which perceives black leaders as corrupt, criminal, oversexed demagogues who had to be destroyed and replaced by Bureau candidates.

In his post-Hoover years, Sullivan sought to repair his ruined career by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blaming Hoover for its more indefensible aspects and by telling liberal audiences and interviewers what he thought they wanted to know. He became a yesman *urbi et orbi*—the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, the Earl Warren Conference on Privacy, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. (in his research for his R.F.K. book), this reviewer and an assortment of newsmen. This reflex for ingratiation was richly ironic: it was rooted in Sullivan's having been conquered by the man whom he first feared and then hated more than any other. The deception that was nurtured by the fear of Hoover ultimately became a shield in dealing with himself and others. Having so long bent the knee, he became powerless to stand erect when the need for submission ended. And what demonstrates this self-deception more clearly than the fact that the accumulation of evidence about Sullivan and his intelligence role, recited in this review and for the most part corroborated by documents, is either ignored, slighted or unrecognizably disfigured in his book? □

True Life Story

EARL ROVIT

THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG. *By Norman Mailer. Little, Brown and Company. 1,056 pp. $16.95.*

From the publication of his first novel, *The Naked and the Dead*, Norman Mailer has been intrigued, obsessed and sometimes frenzied by the subject of *power*. What is it? How does it operate? Is there a relationship between personal and public power? Can it be controlled or does it control? How is it manifest in the sadist, the masochist, the lover, the gangster, the performer, the artist, the corporation personality, the politician, the mystic? What, if any, is its relation to justice, virtue, beauty? In pursuing these questions, Mailer has explored stubbornly and sometimes pompously the half-buried wrinkles of lust, the flashes of personal violence and the wider resonances of massed confrontation, pitched battle and organized warfare. He has traced the mazelike links of modern corporate organization and he has focused specifically on the nodal centers of power in Hollywood, the Pentagon, the media, bigtime sports, NASA and urban and national politics. Himself a political candidate, journalist and counterculture hero, he has not been confined to theoretical abstractions or the detachment of the objective observer. If "action" has some association with power, Mailer has demonstrated time and again his eagerness to grab a piece of it.

Always interesting and never wholly predictable, Mailer's work has characteristically been flawed by flamboyance, howitzer rhetoric, sensationalism and sentimentality. (That these "sins" of artistic excess have been concomitant with commercial success as well as commensurate with the most overweening creative ambition is a fact that has not gone unnoticed by Mailer's critics for the last thirty years.) Jostling uncertainly between fiction and nonfiction, Mailer has gradually come to occupy (for many of us) the role of barometer of the *Zeitgeist*. He broke the news about homosexuality, pop culture, the pervasive spread of corporate structures, the effects of technology on the traditional psyche, the sex and drug revolutions, etc., more quickly and more vividly than anyone else; and although he has been more often than not wrongheaded, he has always been in some important ways right on target. In fact, not since Henry Adams or Dreiser has America had a writer with a keener sense of the modern scene. And although it is probably true that Mailer's well-publicized aims of supplanting Hemingway as America's World Heavyweight Champion of Letters have come a cropper, this loss has been amply balanced by his unparalleled success as special informant—paranoid stool pigeon, as it were—to the straight citizens of the Republic.

For this reason—his proven track record of identifying trends and portents in the contemporary scene—our expectations are large as we approach *The Executioner's Song*, Mailer's massive new book. The "*true life story*" (the italics and intended ironies are Mailer's) of Gary M. Gilmore contains a ready-made cast of characters and a sequence of events in which the themes that have persistently provoked and ignited Mailer's talents come into seething nexus: the uses and abuses of power in sex, language and action; the coercions of behavior and irrational revolt; the wispy promise of escape into an occult dimension, and the dramatic confluence of the private and public spheres in spasms of force and repression. After the shock of realizing that Mailer is serious (Gary Gilmore!), one comes to see that the material was virtually tailored to his purposes. Gilmore is in the long line of Mailer's favored psychopaths, going back through his "white Negro" to Sergeant Croft—with the special advantage that Gilmore is not only "for real" but he also left a substantial volume of taped interviews and letters behind him. And, further, that the most arduous part of the assemblage of documentation had been completed by the labors of Lawrence Schiller. (Schiller's name is joined to Mailer's on the official copyright. Put most simply, Schiller gathered all the materials for *The Executioner's Song*.)

Indeed, the more one becomes engrossed in the story, the more inevitable does it seem that Mailer would be drawn to Gilmore. A 35-year-old psychopath (Texas-born and possibly the grandson of Harry Houdini), self-educated, reasonably intelligent and occasionally articulate, more or less convinced that angels and demons contend for control of the human spirit and believing in some variety of reincarnation, Gilmore is released on parole to Provo, Utah, after spending the bulk of his mature life in prison. In his three months of freedom, he submerges himself in a steamy love affair with a 20-year-old girl (she too with a history of psychological instability), finds himself unable to cope with everyday existence and murders two men seemingly as much to vent his frustration as for any other reason. Found guilty of murder one, he almost succeeds in persuading his girlfriend to commit suicide, and, some nine months after his parole, he forces the reluctant state of Utah to execute him, after a series of legal maneuvers which make his name a national and international headline.

What astonishes me about the book is not that Mailer should have been seized by the material but that he should have exercised such restraint in his treatment of it. In the extensive dramatis personae of *The Executioner's Song*, the one character whom one would expect to be in the forefront of the narration is literally remarkable for his absence. That is,

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Mailer is not there. He is not there as a ranting, reacting, commenting "I" and he is not there (for the most part) in the inflation of language and allusion. (He is a little bit there, perhaps, in that tinge of patronizing tone with which intellectuals are wont to render common folk à la Country-and-Western.) Concealed in the convention of "objective" camera eye, scaling his language down to the folksy banality appropriate to his characters, Mailer can shape his disparate material, his juxtapositions of factual data, documents, reminiscent biography and subjective supposition into a slow, compelling drama, adding increments of reality by the gram and centimeter. More than a thousand pages long, *The Executioner's Song* requires almost all its bulk to validate its authority as an accurate account of "real" life. And it accomplishes this with a near-flawless craft that holds the reader in a numbed state of rapt attention as the whole story slowly unfolds.

But what does the ultimate shape—the final construction of the artifice—mean? What is the "message" that Mailer has discovered in this melodramatic shard of our contemporaneity? Not unnaturally, this is what I find centrally puzzling. First, I think we should be aware that this is not Mailer's *In Cold Blood*, although Capote's book may have served as a partial model and impetus to Mailer's imagination. A much more pertinent precursor, it seems to me, is Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, that brooding exposition of social victimization and anomie. But there are two essential differences between Mailer's and Dreiser's works. Although Dreiser did extensive research and transcribed acres of court testimony preparatory to writing his novel, *An American Tragedy* is fiction. Dreiser struggled to transmute a truth about reality into a truth of his imagination; the product, his novel, has a consequent claim that transcends the rendering of objective reality. In other words, Dreiser's ultimately romantic conception of poetic truth exploits quotidian reality for what it believes to be a more lucid and cogent wisdom than reality can by itself deliver.

In this respect, Mailer pretends to greater modesty in his aspirations than Dreiser. His "true life story" of Gary Gilmore seeks to confuse life and art in a way that Dreiser would have found incomprehensible. *An American Tragedy* would have us believe that this is the way Life is; Mailer's claim is only that this is a relatively accurate description of one flesh-and-blood life from roughly April 1976 to January 1977. Dreiser, that is, assumes the traditional authority of the creative imagination, while Mailer seems to espouse a kind of artistic submission to reality which appears to be far humbler than Dreiser's stance. But, of course, Mailer's docility is itself highly deceptive. The impersonality of the author is also an effective mask for a special kind of artistic arrogance. After all, it is not Gilmore *qua* Gilmore, but *Mailer's* Gilmore who is presented to us; and all the strategies of distancing, interpolating lifelike irrelevancies, and practicing the devices of *cinéma vérité* fail to conceal the fact that the Gilmore of *The Executioner's Song* is Mailer's golem. And one of the major problems about the book is trying to interpret what purpose this not unpowerful creature is meant to serve.

A second significant difference—and it is more than academic—is one of thematic structure or form. Dreiser's novel—like *Madame Bovary, Anna Karenina, The Trial, Native Son, The Stranger*—focuses on that perennially interesting conjunction where crime and punishment intersect. Such novels tend to chronicle the momentum of their hero's will (or lack thereof) as it develops along a collision course with the shifting layers of resistance established by the social and/or metaphysical order. After the collision itself—usually an act of apprehended violence or disobedience of some sort—the "ordeal" or "trial" sequences bring the novel and the attempted definition of "justice" to a resolution. Theoretically, both the accused and the society that accuses can run the gamut from pure innocence to demonic guilt; in practice, the more densely realized the texture of experience, the more likely we are to find guilt and innocence interwoven in profoundly ambiguous ways.

The Executioner's Song imitates this traditional structure, but more for convenience's sake, I believe, than in an effort to deal scrupulously with the issues of justice and culpability which the Gilmore case evokes. The first 500 pages detail the slow weaving of the web. Like a stunned diver bursting from the submerged isolation of prison life, Gilmore wades aimlessly through the shallows of plastic fast-food/used car lot/workaday Provo. His manic lurches of activity—the mercurial swings from infantile exuberance to sluggish depression and incipient violence—are described without comment. By the end of this long section, Gilmore's background, the affair with Nicole Baker and her rejection of him, his capriciousness, capacity for violence and occasional gestures of sincerity have been made to appear in slow motion before the reader. And the nondescript, somewhat pretentious parolee who is now sitting in maximum security charged with first-degree murder is a figure that the reader has been able to observe closely, like a neighbor one had nodded to and heard scandalous stories about.

The second half of the book—the "public" half which covers some six months in time—interthreads three separate lines of action. First, and least interesting, are the predictable defensive moves of the social order responding to the wanton destruction of two of its members. Here are outlined the slow legal and political processes which define the Gilmore "case"; and after the death sentence has been pronounced and the anti-capital punishment movement swings into vain action, the Gilmore case is superseded by Gilmore the

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"symbol"—a bewildering amalgam of the intransigent man himself and the curiously magnified shadows and reflections projected by the communications industry in its competitive zeal to create and report a "hot" story.

The second narrative movement depicts the day-by-day wheeling and dealing of Mailer's silent collaborator, Larry Schiller, as he sets about to compile, record and establish an octopus-monopoly on every conceivable source of data in any way relevant to Gilmore—the man, the case or the symbol. To what extent Schiller's motives are the desire for the big payola for the sole rights to the Gilmore story or the idealistic ambition to assemble the material for an essay in instant history is unclear. Part tabloid-huckster, part ferret and part self-appointed witness to history, Schiller's ultimate role is as enigmatic as are the roots of Gilmore's fatal frustrations. What is gradually evident is the alarming truth that today information *is* power. The medium may very well be the message, but it still requires some substance on which to focus its exposure, tabulate its statistics, shape and squeeze its "human" interest. And at the point where Gilmore—basically an ignorant, insensitive, self-absorbed and emotionally retarded man for all of Mailer's efforts to aggrandize him—becomes grist for the legal, political and media mills, the very possession of Gilmoriana becomes a potential ticket into the power complex.

I suspect that the real pith of the Gilmore story lies in this truth—a truth that Mailer has shrewdly and critically exposed more than once in his career, but a truth that is sentimentally compromised in *The Executioner's Song*. Raw, unassimilated, unintegrated information, as it were, has become the fuel of the locomotive of history, and Mailer as much as anyone else is struggling to be in the engineer's cab, highballing toward the Great Powerhouse beyond the mountains. Fancifully considered, after all, Casey Jones may be the secret and tragic culture-hero of our mythic life; but where in the past his throttle was powered by "experience"—what a man had learned through suffering and struggle (Hemingway, Wolfe, Fitzgerald, O'Neill, et al.)—now "information"—the bits and pieces of bloodless data swept into the computer banks (Mailer, Capote, "investigative journalism")—are the agents of detonation.

The third thread is Gilmore's determination to force the state to go through with the execution, coupled with his no less cogent attempts to Svengali-ize Nicole Baker into a suicide pact with him through a series of remarkable letters. It is in this line of narration—the writhings and thrashings and posturings of two unstable, incompetent, pathetic personalities—that Mailer fudges up the clear edges of his construction. As an analyst of our media-hyped society, he wants to show the transformation of a private, unattractive misfit into a public, T-shirt adornment celebrity. As a novelist in the naturalistic tradition, he exposes Gilmore in his naked individuality on the reasonable assumption that familiarity will breed sympathetic understanding—especially when it starts out as contempt. But he also gets hooked on the barbs of his own romantic obsessions into an escalation of Gilmore's intrinsic significance. That is, there remains an obdurate sentimental core in Mailer's imagination that is determined to present Gilmore to the reader as some variety of existential hero—his urban hipster gone West into the apocalyptic sunset.

It is here that the difficulties with Gilmore as golem become insoluble. Mailer is responsible enough to resist the easy temptations of presenting Gilmore as either a victim of or a rebel against society. Certainly his conditioning (his odd family background and especially his prison experience) had a strong role in misshaping him, but these influences are far from decisive. Thousands have suffered worse influences than Gilmore and fared immeasurably better. By the same token, he makes a poor example of a rebel. Although Gilmore is proud, vain and defiant, Mailer does not even pretend to understand on what inner certitude or felt truth his sense of selfhood rests. *The Executioner's Song* is finally a "true life history" in which the keys to understanding are missing. The reader is left at the end of this exhaustive exploration of the character and destiny of Gary Gilmore unguided by the author and unconfronted with a meaningful shape of experience. Instead we have a multithousand-pieced mosaic of bits of information, cunningly, provocatively put together, signifying nothing while sentimentally claiming a great deal.

It seems to me that Mailer—immensely talented, knowledgeable, energetic—is frantically depending on life, unmediated by the passionate imagination, to announce meanings which he so well knows only man can provide. *The Executioner's Song* is a compelling, constantly informative narrative; its only failure is that for all the interesting areas it illuminates, it leaves in the shadows the really important ones: those wellsprings of human behavior which we have come to expect Mailer to divine and disclose. □

BOOK NOTES

The West

CAREY McWILLIAMS

A COMPANION TO CALIFORNIA. *By James D. Hart. Oxford University Press. 504 pp. $22.50.*

An exceptional state on many counts—cultural, historical, social, geographical—California has grown so rapidly that even native sons and daughters find it difficult to remember what happened the day before yesterday. Now at long last, James D. Hart, director of the Bancroft Library at the University of California, has come up with a superb guide that tells Californians and visitors most of what they need to know about the state. Delightful reading and an invaluable reference. Contains an admirable chronological index.

CHICANOS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: Status and Issues. *Prepared by Ronald W. López, Arturo Madrid-Barela and Reynaldo Flores Macías, for the National Chicano Commission on Higher Education. Monograph No. 7. Chicano Studies Center Publications. University of California, Los Angeles.*

An up-to-date authoritative report by three Chicano scholars on a subject of increasing importance in the Southwest.

THE CHICANOS: As We See Ourselves. *Essays by Fourteen Chicano Scholars. Arnulfo D. Trejo, editor. University of Arizona Press. 221 pp. $7.50.*

Just what the title says: Chicanos examined (for a change) by Chicano scholars, rather than, as usual, by Anglo observers. A valuable source.

RURAL COMMUNITIES IN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY:

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Development and Developers. *By Ted K. Bradshaw and Edward J. Blakely. Praeger Publishers. 188 pp. $17.95.*

By focusing on rapid and diverse changes affecting rural California, these two West Coast scholars have illuminated the meaning of "rural" in an advanced industrial state. From 1970 to 1976, California's nonmetropolitan counties have grown at a rate three times that of its metropolitan counties. Over the years, in fact, rural areas in California have never experienced the dramatic loss of population that was felt in rural areas throughout the rest of the nation. Bradshaw and Blakely explore the reasons for the relative stability of California's countryside, and assess the impact of advanced technology on rural society. An important study.

BISBEE '17. *By Robert Houston. Pantheon Books. 287 pp. $10.*

The Bisbee strike of 1917 at the Phelps Dodge copper mine in Arizona was one of the most dramatic episodes in Western labor history: Felix Frankfurter wrote a famous contemporary report on the subject. In *Bisbee '17*, the strike is fictionalized. Bisbee was an extraordinary example of brutal class warfare in a "frontier" setting; some 1,300 miners were rousted from their homes by company gunmen and thugs, and driven far into the desert. Now if only we could get a good story of this same kind about what happened in Goldfield, Nevada, during the lockout of 1907, when President Theodore Roosevelt sent in Federal troops to "restore order," memories of these two chapters of labor history might be revived; they deserve to be. Joseph Conlin of California State University at Chico is, I am told, doing a film on the Goldfield lockout.

PERSON/PLANET: The Creative Disintegration of Industrial Society. *By Theodore Roszak. Anchor Press. 347 pp. $10.95.*

The tenth anniversary of Woodstock elicited feature pieces in *The New York Times* (August 12 and 13) under this caption: "After Woodstock: The Impact of the Counterculture." But, as one might expect, *The Times* interviewed almost everyone except the man who knows most about the counterculture, Theodore Roszak. Perhaps the New York reporters forgot to interview the prophet of the counterculture because he lives so far away, in California. In *Person/Planet*, Roszak offers us some reflections on the effects and aftermath of the counterculture, of which we have by no means heard the last. Revolutions almost never fully attain their goals, and prophets, of course, are seldom honored. But the failure of the New York media to focus on Roszak's latest book is hard to understand in view of its obvious relevance to the Woodstock anniversary. In some small part, it may be the fault of the author and his editor. The title is vague and inflated; some good editing would have sharpened Roszak's impact. Nonetheless, this is an important book by a creative scholar rich in insight. It should be read along with *The Promise of the Coming Dark Age* by another California scholar, L.S. Stavrianos. □

MUSIC

DAVID HAMILTON

Not the least surprising revelation in the posthumous history of Alban Berg's *Lulu* was the news that the Austrian composer and conductor Friedrich Cerha had begun work back in 1962 on the materials for the opera's third act, left incomplete at Berg's death in December 1935. Officially, the publishers, Universal Edition, respected the wishes of the composer's widow that *Lulu* be left a fragment, and remained publicly unresponsive to the well-documented insistence of George Perle, the American composer and Berg scholar, that with a minimum of conjecture the missing act could be rendered performable. Privately, they had put into motion measures to enhance the value of their investment at the earliest possible date.

Frau Berg lived on until 1976, 91 years old, a longevity that must have tried the publishers' patience. It also gave Cerha ample time for what has proved one of the most painstakingly thorough examples ever of musical "restoration." (*Herstellung* is the term Cerha prefers.) His preliminary descriptive report attests to methodological and practical soundness, while also naturally confirming Perle's basic contention that the opera's continuity and direction had been firmly fixed by Berg. (At a Music Critics Association seminar in July, Perle repeatedly made clear his approval of Cerha's work.) This *Lulu* is verifiably a more certain realization of the composer's plan than several "completions" long in active circulation—e.g., Alfano's lame final duet for Puccini's *Turandot* or the standard performing text of Mozart's *Requiem.*

In short, there shouldn't be any controversy whatsoever. A new line about *Lulu* is emerging, however, first broached by Robert Craft in 1977, more recently echoed in other quarters. "Nobody knows exactly why Berg himself failed to finish *Lulu*," writes Alan Rich in *New York* after the Santa Fe performances of the completed score—as if death were not a sufficiently definitive reason. "He had suspended work on the opera months before his final illness"—a half-truth at best. The actual composition was already finished when, in early 1935, Berg interrupted the orchestration of his opera to accept a commission for a violin concerto—but he resumed the orchestration of *Lulu* again in the fall, after the onset of what proved, unforeseeably, to be his final illness. Rich again: "Might not Berg, whose sense of drama is beautifully attested to in his masterpieces, simply

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have realized that his new operatic venture had become an artistic dead end?" The facts hardly support that. Acceptance of the commission made good sense; the violin concerto would be played all over Europe and America, making money for Berg, whose considerable income from performances of *Wozzeck* had shrunk drastically since the Nazis had banned it from German theaters (a ban that would, of course, significantly restrict the potential income from *Lulu* as well), while, at 50, the composer still expected to have plenty of time to return to *Lulu*.

No, those who would argue *Lulu* a failure will have to do it by themselves; Alban Berg cannot be made a convincing witness for that brief. My own reaction to the Santa Fe performance was certainly the opposite; the complete work improves on and enriches the fragment we have known heretofore. The libretto rejoins two plays that Wedekind, for practical reasons, separated: *Earth Spirit* and *Pandora's Box*; its turning point comes in the middle of the second act, when Lulu is imprisoned for the murder of her third husband, Dr. Schön. In the rest of this act—to the point where the narrative thread of the "unfinished" opera broke off—she escapes and seduces Schön's son, Alwa. Though we had read that this began the downward turn in Lulu's fortunes, it never really came out that way—she looked to be moving on to husband number four. The bits of pantomime or dialogue that served as makeshifts for the missing last act gave little shape to this dramatic curve.

Now Lulu's passage from prison, through the Parisian demimonde, to a Soho garret and death at the hands of Jack the Ripper, receives equal time with her ascent, and equal musical weight. Familiar material recurs in new contexts—the Parisian scene takes up the feverish "circus music," not heard since the Prologue—and there is remarkable new writing, including some brilliant, complex ensembles. The final scene, where the three clients of Lulu, now a prostitute, are played by the singers who represented her three husbands, is rich in pathos and irony. The subject matter of Act III is undeniably sordid; the wonder is that the characters emerge still more sympathetically.

Lulu must surely remain a rather special opera. First, by virtue of its source in Wedekind's highly stylized expressionism; despite Berg's modifications of the original, the irrationality of the dialogue sometimes wars with the essentially romantic-realistic stance of the music, forever urging our sympathy with the characters. (The extent and power of Bergian orchestral commentary can be rather neatly measured by its absence in Werner Herzog's new *Woyzeck* film, which is resolutely realistic in sight and soundtrack until the murder scene, when slow motion and the slow movement of the Marcello Oboe Concerto inexplicably intrude.) Second, because the central character still awaits adequate definition in performance; all the requirements—a female Don Juan who can sing dodecaphonic coloratura with the tonal strength and warmth of a dramatic soprano—are not likely to be often met, though we may hope that the opera's increased currency will make it a target for aspiring, ambitious singers.

Not unexpectedly, the weakest feature of Santa Fe's generally respectable production was Nancy Shade's performance as Lulu: vocally underequipped, her tomboyish physical attack (possibly a clumsy imitation of Louise Brooks in the Pabst silent film) was wholly inappropriate. Director Colin Graham was more successful with other aspects of the action; unlike the controversial Chereau production in Paris last spring, this one hewed pretty close to Berg's very specific plan of action, as did John Conklin's designs, in acceptable jazz-age *Jugendstil*. Welcome old friends from the 1977 Metropolitan Opera production were Andrew Foldi's grubbily lovable Schigolch (capitalizing hugely on the opportunities dealt him in the new scenes) and Lenus Carlson's strongly sung doubling of the Animal Trainer and the Athlete. Barry Busse brought an imposing voice to Alwa; William Dooley was forceful but vocally spent as his father; Katherine Ciesinski made a curiously neutral Countess Geschwitz; Joseph Frank was striking in several smaller parts. Arthur Jacobs's professional if occasionally free English translation was used, and a surprising lot of it was comprehensible. Under Michael Tilson Thomas, the orchestra played vigorously if a shade scrappily; the well-shaped performance was marred by one unauthorized and destructive alteration in the music of the third act.

(The Santa Fe première was taped by the BBC and Chicago's WFMT, but as of this writing plans for broadcast in this country are not set. A recording, based on the Paris production conducted by Pierre Boulez, is to be issued shortly by Deutsche Grammophon. The Metropolitan Opera will present the complete work during the 1980/81 season.)

The West's other major operatic première this summer took me to Aspen, where the tented amphitheater served as locus for *Houdini*, a "circus opera" by the Dutch composer Peter Schat, to a libretto (in English) by Adrian Mitchell that took the famous escapes as an allegory of man's liberation. Historically, biographical opera is a problematic genre (consider Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*, Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, among others), but the theatrical potential of circus stunts and magic tricks is appealing. In fact, the Houdini stunts, performed by "escapologist" Mark Mazzarella, proved a hard act to follow; neither the music nor Ian Strasfogel's production (using elements of the Amsterdam première) could stand up to them.

The work's populist intention was not matched by anything comparably forthright in the score; one longed for a rousing tune, or perhaps a clearly ironic one, but neither ever came forth. Sincerity isn't enough in such a project; the musical left has not, since Kurt Weill, consistently found a way to overcome the gap between its desired audiences and its aspirations to musical substance.

Schat's strenuously altitudinous style of vocal melody sounds "modern," but precludes intelligibility of text (a trait confirmed by other of his works performed at Aspen), and the prevalent heavy textures soon became monotonous, as did the incessant writing for high trumpets. The large and able forces, led by Richard Dufallo, made at least as much effect as those in the Amsterdam première, which can be heard in a recording on the imported Composer's Voice Special label, available in import shops.

The other composer honored during Aspen's contemporary music weeks was Elliott Carter: no new works, but welcome retrospectives, ranging from his Symphony No. 1 (1942) to *Syringa* (1978). That unfamiliar symphony surely deserves more attention, to judge from the excellent performance conducted by Paul Dunkel; its quirky individuality sets it well apart from its more self-consciously nationalistic contem-

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poraries. In *Syringa*, passionate words and phrases in Greek (sung by a baritone) flow past in provocative counterpoint to John Ashbery's cool, tricky, fluent poem (sung by a mezzo-soprano), while the ensemble of eleven instruments mediates between these two dimensions. Ashbery's images release vivid instrumental inventions, galvanize twists of motion ("Then one day, everything changed"), float on memorable melodic curves ("Only love stays on the brain"). Carter's recent preoccupation with vocal music is wedded here in fresh and fascinating ways to his long interest in the experience of time. The superb soloists of last winter's New York première, Jan DeGaetani and Thomas Paul, achieved in Aspen an even more perfect balance of their diversities, and the excellent ensemble was led by Dufallo.

Ten days in Aspen bring much music, and I recall much with pleasure. Among "standard" works: a perfectly poised and cushioned delivery of the Debussy Quartet by the American String Quartet; a powerful performance of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* led by Jorge Mester, with soloists Alexander Stevenson, DeGaetani, Leslie Guinn, Paul, John Humphrey and narrator Werner Klemperer. Some typical Aspen novelties: an unexpectedly attractive Harp Sonata by Germaine Tailleferre, impeccably played by Nancy Allen; Poulenc's elegant *Aubade*, given much point and perhaps too much muscle by pianist Samuel Lipman, with Mester conducting; Richard Strauss's early Cello Sonata, served up by Zara Nelsova and Claude Frank with appropriate panache and sentiment; and his *Alpine Symphony*, a disconcerting patchwork of fabulous orchestral invention and sometimes stupefying banality, its case well argued by Leonard Slatkin and the Aspen Festival Orchestra, assisted by seventeen offstage horns. Among new works: Dan Welcher's *Abeja blanca* proved an effective vehicle for DeGaetani and English hornist Philip West, and I much admired tenor Paul Sperry's virtuosity in Jacob Druckman's *Animus IV*, without being at all sure what the piece, with its tape-refracted glosses on songs by Liszt and Chabrier, was trying to tell me.

Most of the summer's concerts at Aspen were taped for broadcast during the winter in several major cities—in New York, on station WNCN. □

THEATER

HAROLD CLURMAN

In London last June, I saw *Evita*, the musical by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber (authors of *Jesus Christ, Superstar*), and I wondered what made the show so enormous a hit there. It had been running for two or three seasons (it still is); scalpers were selling admissions outside the theater and the house was packed.

One reason easily adduced is that English musicals are rarely as razzle-dazzle as Harold Prince, the American director who staged *Evita*, has made it. The show fairly jumps with display. More important, the play centers on a working-class girl, a nightclub performer (like Eva Peron) of little moral stability who becomes the consort of the leader and herself virtually the prime mover of a great country. Her ambition and guile impress; her sexiness intrigues; her eventual power astonishes, and her early death softens the tale. There is, too, something of the tart-with-a-heart-of-gold syndrome back of it all. (The gold, it has been remarked, is deposited in a Swiss bank.)

The piece has no social meaning at all. The audience has very little knowledge of or genuine interest in Peron: Argentina in its mind is connected more with tangos than with politics. To make sure that we understand that Peron and Eva are not beneficent characters, the "symbolic" figure of Che Guevara (never present in Argentina at the time) serves as a Chorus representing the democratic resistance to the Peron dictatorship.

Seeing the show again (at the Broadway Theatre), I was able to judge it on its own terms without worrying about the motives of the public reaction. (It should be noted, however, that due to *Evita*'s immense popularity in London, the advance sale in New York is reported to be close to $2 million and there is a chance that despite a lackluster press reception it may do well here also.) The opening night audience cheered, but opening nights are deceptive: they are crowded with people who have every inducement to wish the enterprise well. The show itself, under its splendiferous cover, is basically threadbare.

The main and oft-repeated musical number, "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" (nobody does), consists of a pleasantly melancholic and vaguely Hispanic phrase; the rest of the score is nondescript. The lyrics (when you can hear them) are marked by a philistine "sophistication." There is little "book" or spoken dialogue. What holds the attention is the "scenography." I do not mean just the settings or the lighting but the busyness, the noise, the capering about and the horsing around. Hardly anything is sung by the principals without something extra on the side (a hot couple dancing and swirling), so if one is not amused by the singing, an added gimmick may help out. Off-stage choruses envelop the singers. Twelve army officers in blue-green, red and white stomp around rhythmically (great effect!). True choreography is either nonexistent or the dancing is banal in the extreme. Flags are dropped, colors abound, newsreels are projected. (They were about the only thing that interested me, because they showed the "real" Eva Peron being received by Church officials in Rome and by Franco in Spain.)

I liked an attractive young woman, listed as "Peron's mistress," played by

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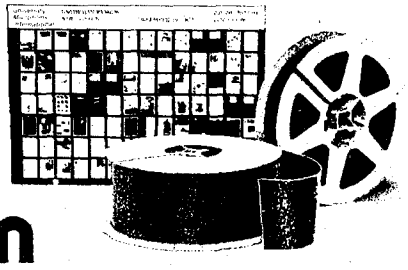

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Jane Ohringer. Peron turns her out of bed for the new mistress and wife-to-be, Evita. (I wouldn't have done so.) Not that Patti LuPone is without quality: she is in fact an able actress (her death scene is good) and her performance is a brave one, but nothing she is given to do and nothing in the way she does it possesses the glamour which might explain her husband's or the populace's infatuation. She is chiefly asked to be snippy. Mandy Patinkin's Che Guevara looks right, and he has a sound voice which is strained to the point of breathlessness. Bob Gunton looks a bit like Peron—and a little foolish. The chorus belts and belts and belts. Gaudy raucousness, a semblance of historical fact, and a "bad girl" turned powerful who dies at 33 may (with the aid of sweeping publicity) still sell a lot of tickets.

How can I breathe the least word to hurt that perennial winner *Peter Pan* (Lunt-Fontanne Theatre)? *Peter Pan* is *Peter Pan* is *Peter Pan*. This holds true even in its musical version—much less dainty and wry than James Barrie's play. No matter how it is produced, there is something endearing in the material. For it is about a little boy who never wanted to grow up—and most theater audiences also achieve that goal.

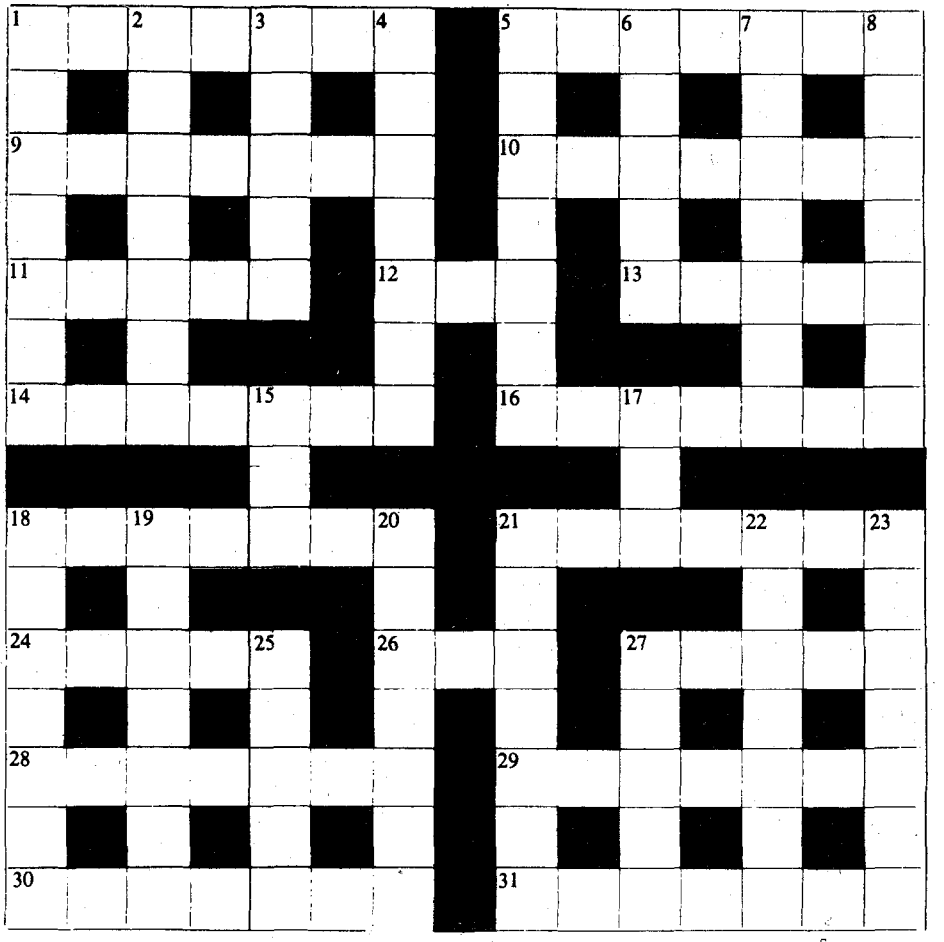
Barrie's play was an expression of sly rebellion through fantasy against the stuffiness of the Victorian era, an escape from decorum accomplished without offense to any of the period's proprieties. That is why it has never disappeared in England. For us today, the play needs a little propping up, which is done through Carolyn Leigh's lyrics and Mark Charlap's music with the further and very agile aid of lyrics by Comden and Green and music by Jule Styne.

Peter's first flying entrance is always exhilarating (I wish I were unable to see the wires), and even more so are the children, twisting merrily along in the air with him. One of the show's major assets is certainly Sandy Duncan's modest performance: she doesn't "star" herself; she has exactly the right body for the part, and she avoids cute embellishments.

As for the rest, some might complain that certain moments of Jerome Robbins's choreography as now adapted by Rob Iscove are too "Broadway"—that is, slightly vulgar—and that Peter Wolf's settings look somewhat tatty. But who, I repeat, can cry "nay" to dear little Peter? I forbear. □

Crossword Puzzle No. 1792

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 I got in bed, obviously, being so intolerantly convinced . . . (7)
5 . . . and attempted to persuade others. (7)
9 One who gets on—especially in someone's dining room. (7)
10 Stiffly dignified, as some clown might be. (7)
11 A British town that shows the way, we hear. (5)
12, 15, 17 and 18 down Paw's bound to get warmed up in such play. (3,2,1,3,3,4)
13 Trees chopped up, being full of pith. (5)
14 Smith's evidently had wealth, not as in the sort of periodicals you must be acquainted with. (7)
16 The Army Air Corps carried on in it. (7)
18 and 27 across Will it ultimately sound like what the bridge player might hope to collect? (3,4,5)
21 The house of cheese, in a modest way. (7)
24 Jock evidently doesn't have common old English money, but one is still wealthy. (5)
26 The host doesn't mind if it gets broken—in fact it might be given to you cracked. (3)
27 See 18 across
28 His gore is shed by the monster-type. (7)
29 Old rebel of recurrent newsworthiness, and in so much confusion, too! (7)
30 and 31 Fish is not really so considered, but it's something to chew on. (4,3,7)

DOWN

1 The little one is not quite long for the old place. (7)
2 What might be marked RIP doesn't have one for the most serious. (7)
3 They come and go, like phony diets. (5)
4 Leads straight south. (7)
5 and 6 Cover the knee, perhaps, if you make a preliminary examination so. (4,3,5)
7 It's all confused about a tear that's shed—in passing? (7)
8 Certainly not a live one gone wrong, creating a feeling of resentment. (7)
15, 17, and 18 See 12 across
19 Get me up to the drinking place and leave—that's an order! (7)
20 Away from the speaker, partly with it here. (7)
21 With the salad plant, and French, it might have held oil once. (7)
22 Equivalent to an "occupied" sign? That's funny! (7)
23 Take advantage of a good deed? (7)
25 Possibly writ to be 13. (5)
27 You may see your this, a few weeks after the summer vacation dance. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1791

ACROSS: 1 It's just as well; 9 Layer; 10 Mendelian; 11 Chigger; 12 Sitwell; 13 Petit; 14 Idealists; 16 Rucksacks; 18 Bosom; 19 Napping; 21 Tickets; 22 Inability; 23 Uvula; 24 One for the road. DOWN 1 In loco parentis; 2 Stylistic; 3 and 20 Upright piano; 4 Timer; 5 Songsters; 6 Edental; 7 Loire; 8 English mustard; 14 Incognito; 15 Sostenuto; 17 Suicide; 18 Because; 21 Tryst.

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